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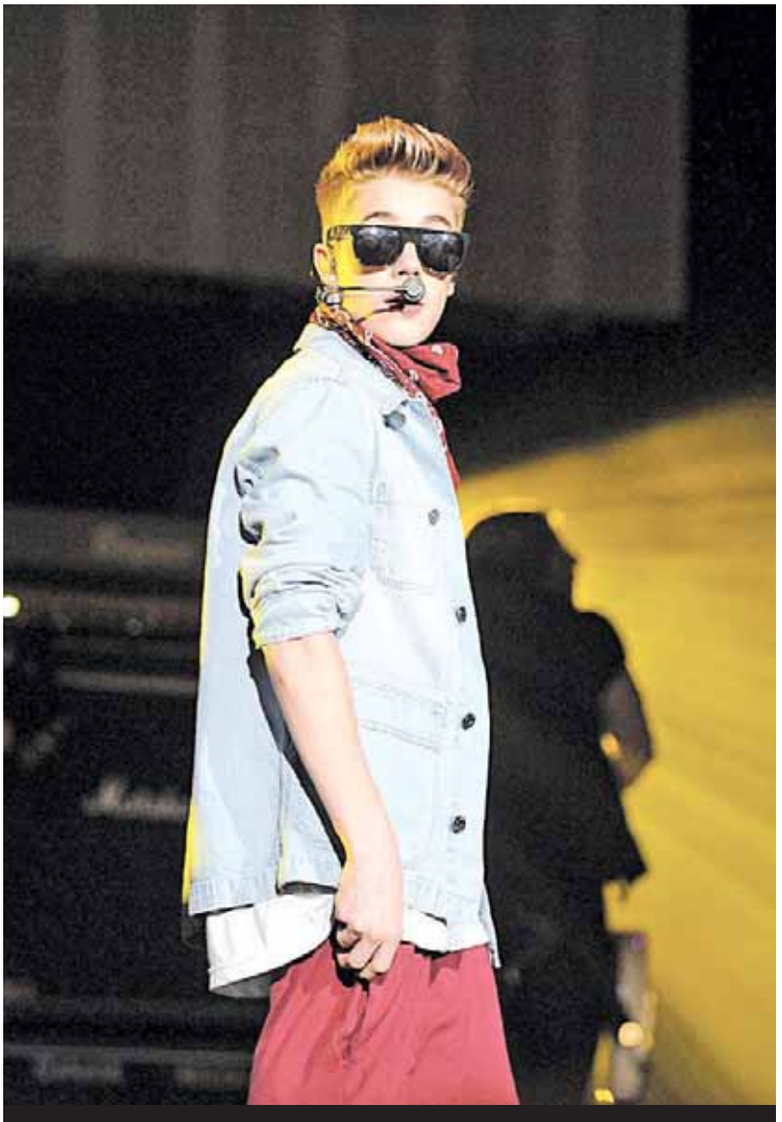

BIEBER MURDER PLOT?

PAGE 21

Belieb it or not: Justin Bieber was the apparent target of a grisly murder plot concocted by an inmate in New Mexico, state police said Wednesday. The singer's management, asked to comment, released a statement saying only that they take "every precaution to protect and ensure the safety of Justin and his fans." CHRIS MCKAY/GETTY IMAGES

Don't let a quake leave you shaken

Council. City hopes locals will embrace emergency preparedness with release of grim figures detailing how a large temblor in Georgia Strait could impact Vancouver

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

Three hundred dead. One thousand in hospital. Fifteen billion dollars of residential damage.

That's what the Metro Vancouver region should expect if a 7.3-magnitude crustal earthquake shakes along a fault in the Georgia Strait 30 kilometres west of Vancouver — and the city wants these numbers to spur people into action.

The city will use the new numbers from Natural Resources Canada to adapt a Californian public-awareness video, complete with menacing music and families separated by disaster, in hopes of getting residents to buy earthquake-preparation kits and form a plan in case of emergency.

"It might turn some people off, but it will get people to pay attention," Vancouver deputy city manager Sadhu Johnston said after presenting an earthquake planning update to council Wednesday.

The tone switches halfway to inspire people to prepare, he said, adding that the city will save money by using the content made available by California.

The scenario featured isn't the "Big One," a Cascadia subduction earthquake, but it addresses the most credible planning scenario.

"We're not planning for the worst worst-case scenario, but we're planning for one of the worst-case scenarios," Johnston said.

The city has held earthquake exercises, placed emergency-supply containers, and made seismic upgrades to bridges and structures, but there's "a lot more work to do," he added.

This will include water-infrastructure upgrades, engaging the business community and other regions, and co-ordinating emergency-response teams.

Emergency preparedness and fire rescue both secured funding in the 2013 budget passed Tuesday, but federal cuts to the Heavy Urban Search and Rescue team will make it harder to meet operational needs going forward, Johnston said.

Staff will present their draft Earthquake Risk Mitigation Action Plan to council in May 2013.

Online resource

- Find a how-to list to prepare for an emergency at getprepared.ca.

Flights of fancy

Airlines are stepping up their mixology skills with drinks like Grandma's Coffee and Sky Breeze PAGE 26

Google me this: What was the top search of 2012?

Nope, not Gangnam Style, but you're close PAGE 18

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Council green-lights $5.5M Comox-Helmcken greenway

2-km stretch. Hospital, businesses, residents were consulted to create plan that includes separated bike lanes in parts

EMILY JACKSON
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Bikers, walkers and bench-sitters have won a long battle for a greenway connecting Burrard Street to Stanley Park.

It took 17 years of planning, but Vancouver city council voted unanimously Wednesday to finally proceed with a $5.46-million plan to turn a two-kilometre stretch of Comox Street into a greenway.

Construction will begin early next year on the first part of the Comox-Helmcken greenway, which will eventually connect to False Creek when Phase 2 is built through Yaletown.

It features separated bike lanes in parts, a direct east-west route downtown, benches, better lighting and a confusing mix of one-way-traffic routes that will keep most drivers off the street.

St. Paul's Hospital, three hotels, businesses and residents were consulted to create the plan that 74 per cent supported in a city survey.

The Centre for Hip Health and Mobility also consulted 200 seniors living in B.C. housing or long-term care directly on the corridor.

These vulnerable citizens wanted a safer place to walk, Dr. Joanie Sims-Gould said, adding she's thrilled their voices were heard in the plan.

But not everyone is pleased.

In order to create a straight path for bikers, the city will widen a narrow passage between the cul-de-sac at the end of Comox Street to link it to the park, even though there's already a link one block north.

"This is a total waste of money," resident Val Lemaitre said. She doesn't understand why the city has to displace the natural greenery when bikers could simply add 100 yards to their routes.

The loss of 27 metred parking spots will cost the city $250,000 each year in lost revenue.

The path that connects the cul-de-sac at the end of Comox Street to Stanley Park will be developed into a wider, bike- and pedestrian-friendly lane as part of the Comox-Helmcken greenway. CONTRIBUTED BY VAL LEMAITRE

Commercial fishing and recreational boats at Kitamaat Village. NGAIO HOTTE/UBC

Risk. Tanker spill could outweigh Northern Gateway rewards: Study

The financial costs of a worst-case-scenario tanker spill off the North Coast could outweigh the economic rewards of the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline for the region, says a study by the UBC Fisheries Centre.

The study funded by World Wildlife Fund Canada looked at the potential losses to commercial fisheries, tourism, aquaculture and port activities in the area in the event of a tanker accident.

Using the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill as an example, researchers calculated various scenarios, from a spill with no impact to a high-impact spill of 257,000 barrels of crude, in winter, over 52 kilometres of coastline that includes Haida Gwaii and Porcher Island, near Prince Rupert.

"The study highlights that if a tanker spill occurs, the economic gains from the Enbridge Northern Gateway project to the North Coast region would be wiped out by the costs of the spill," said Rashid Sumaila, director of the fisheries centre.

Total losses due to oil contamination could range from $90 to $300 million in lost output in other ocean industries, thousands of jobs and up to $200 million of lost gross domestic product, said the report released Wednesday by Sumaila and Ngaio Hotte.

That compares to total economic benefits from the project for the region of $628 million in direct output, up to 8,000 jobs and $293 million in GDP. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pipeline less popular than ever in B.C.: Poll

Northern gateway. Respondents also asked how advertising has affected their views

KATE WEBB
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A new poll shows the Northern Gateway pipeline has never been less popular with British Columbians.

The Forum Research survey commissioned by the Gitga'at First Nation found 60 per cent of British Columbians oppose the pipeline, up from 52 per cent in April and 45 per cent last December.

Thirty-one per cent now favour the $7-billion Enbridge proposal, down from 37 per cent in April and 41 per cent last December.

The pollsters also asked respondents about some of the impacts of the oil giant's $5-million adverting campaign, as well as ads put out by its detractors.

Of the 86 per cent of British Columbians who said they had seen some kind of messaging about Enbridge in the past six months, 46 per cent said it had no effect on their opinion, 37 per cent said it had worsened their opinion and 14 per cent said it had improved their opinion.

Forty per cent of people were aware of the "disappearing islands" story in which the company released a map of the tanker route that omitted about 1,000 square kilometres of islands in the Douglas Channel.

Of those who were aware of the story, 58 per cent said the map had worsened their opinion of the project, nine per cent said the map improved their opinion, and 32 per cent said it had no effect.

An aerial view of Douglas Channel, the proposed termination point for an oil pipeline in the Northern Gateway Project. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

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Return that urn

Husband's ashes stolen from woman's West End home

The remains of a woman's husband were stolen from her West End home earlier this month and she is hoping to get them back.

The urn was one of many items stolen during a break-in to the elderly woman's home.

It is approximately four inches tall and is described as a yellow, blown-glass bottle painted with cherry blossoms and black lines.

The woman is hoping the urn will be found and returned to her.

Anyone with information about the stolen urn is being encouraged to contact the Vancouver police.

CARA MCKENNA/METRO

Port Mann

Drivers plan to change once tolls rise: Poll

A new poll suggests many drivers who use the new Port Mann Bridge are planning to make significant changes to their driving habits once the higher tolls kick in.

Forty-six per cent of drivers who cross the bridge monthly, or more frequently, said they will seek out new routes when the toll rises to $3.50 on March 1 for everyone except TReO decal users, who get to keep paying $1.50 until the end of 2013. Another 33 per cent said they will drive over the bridge less often.

While 52 per cent said their driving habits have not been affected by the tolls, 34 per cent of weekly users said they already plan to drive over the bridge less often. KATE WEBB/METRO

Google knows what we want to know. B.C. beer, sports and music a hit on search engine

Canadians can't seem to get enough information on B.C.'s finest.

Local beer, music and sports were among the most-searched terms in Canada according to Google's Zeitgeist 2012 report.

Granville Island Brewing took top honours as the most-searched craft beer. B.C.'s Okanagan Springs (7th place) and Dead Frog (10th place) also made the top 10 list.

As far as Canadian music, the West Coast's Carly Rae Jepsen was the third most searched and the band Hedley fourth.

Steve Nash placed second behind Tiger Woods in the athlete category. Burnaby's Christine Sinclair, Canada's award-winning soccer captain, was the country's third most searched Olympian.

And the Vancouver Canucks placed third in the sports-team category behind the Toronto Blue Jays and Maple Leafs.

In 10th place, Green party Leader Elizabeth May was the only B.C. politician to make the list.

Google analyzed more than one trillion searches for its online popularity contest. It ranks the volume of public searches to get a snapshot of the most popular topics of the year.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Popularity contest

1 trillion

Google analyzed more than one trillion searches for its online popularity contest.

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Parents of murdered First Nations girl call on witnesses

CJ Morningstar Fowler. We can't treat this death as 'just another dead Indian,' says grand chief of First Nations Summit

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS
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Glen Wilson and Matilda Fowler tearfully pleaded for witnesses to the murder of their teen daughter to come forward, and then joined aboriginal leaders Wednesday in a call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered First Nations women.

The body of CJ Morningstar Fowler, a 16-year-old member of the Gitanmaax First Nation (near Hazelton), was found by a man walking his dog in Kamloops last week.

The teen's mother said she doesn't want any more young girls going missing or murdered, adding nobody deserves to lose a daughter.

"(CJ) didn't deserve this and all I want to know is who took my daughter's life," said Fowler, who struggled to speak through tears. "She always told me I was a strong woman and I was her hero. And now she's my angel who is going to be looking down on me."

Wilson said he doesn't want his daughter's murder to be another case that will just be swept under the rug.

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo said that the young girl's death is yet another reason for Ottawa to call an inquiry to ensure the safety and security of First Nations communities across Canada.

"There is no good reason for the loss of life of this young girl," Atleo said. "(The inquiry) is important so that there is a shared effort in this country to understand the full breadth and depth of the root causes (of) why this is happening."

Grand Chief Ed John of the First Nations Summit said we can't treat this death as "just another dead Indian."

"There is a perception out there that reflects that attitude in this country," he said. "It's unfortunate, but we do know that many more Canadians hold a very compassionate view, and that's what we need to plead to. That Canadians are right-minded and, when they see injustice, they will step forward."

A compassionate view

"Canadians are right-minded and, when they see injustice, they still step forward."
Grand Chief Ed John of the First Nations Summit

A photo of CJ Morningstar Fowler is displayed as her father Glen Wilson wipes away his tears during a news conference in Vancouver. Fowler, 16, was found killed in Kamloops last week. Her parents have joined aboriginal leaders in calling for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered First Nations women and girls. PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

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Longwall coal-mining equipment is displayed in the German Mining Museum in Bochum in May 2011.
HELEN SIMONSSON/FLICKR

Mine doesn't need foreign workers: Expert

Murray River project. Documents show HD Mining did not intend to train Canadian workers until construction phase completed

KATE WEBB
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An American coal-mining expert says Canadian workers could do almost all of the jobs HD Mining wants to give to 201 temporary foreign workers, given six months' experience underground and supervision by a handful of foreign consultants.

Gary Whisman is executive director of the Kentucky Coal Academy, which has trained 55,000 new and experienced miners since 2005.

He said the longwall mining method HD Mining plans to use in its Murray River project near Tumbler Ridge typically requires companies to provide on-site training to even experienced miners, so it doesn't much matter that the method has never been used before in Canada.

"You're going to have to hire a longwall co-ordinator, someone in that line, and then you're going to have to pick up some people that are experienced, maybe a long-wall foreman or someone who's done the task before," Whisman explained, suggesting many of those experts could be recruited from the U.S.

"You're going to have to have three, four, five people maybe that are experienced in that task … but if the money's right a lot of people would come."

He weighed in on the controversy on the day documents were released showing HD Mining does not intend to train any Canadian workers at the Murray River mine until after the two-and-a-half-year construction phase is complete.

The transition plan reveals the foreign workers would be used to train Canadians for another two years after construction, with the full transition to a Canadian workforce taking a total of more than 14 years.

Long process

14

The full transition to a Canadian workforce would take a total of more than 14 years, according to the plan.

Longwall mining is a technique in which slabs of coal several kilometres long are extracted from underground by very heavy, very expensive equipment. Whisman noted, however, the operational costs are four to five times lower than those of conventional mining methods.

HD Mining has argued the temporary foreign workers are necessary because of a shortage of experienced underground miners in Canada, but Whisman said Canadians could become certified experienced underground miners with 40 hours of classroom training and six months of work experience.

The two unions representing the majority of skilled workers required on mine sites are seeking an injunction in federal court to stop HD Mining from bringing Chinese workers over.

B.C. Jobs Minister Pat Bell issued a written statement Wednesday that ignored questions about the length of HD Mining's planned transition to Canadian workers, instead touting a recent agreement signed between HD Mining, the province and Northern Lights College to train local workers in longwall mining operations.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Crime severity index.
Mayors butt heads over Langley statistics

Statistics reviewed by the Vancouver Police Board Wednesday show crime severity in Langley was more than twice the national average last year, but Langley Mayor Peter Fassbender said the crime in his community is going down, not up.

The crime-severity index (CSI) measures the seriousness and volume of crime, rather than the crime rate, which only measures volume.

In 2011, the national average was 77.6 and the CSI in Vancouver was 103.4.

Langley's CSI was the highest in the region at 170.5.

The major factor in measuring CSI is sentencing, meaning a crime with a longer sentence will have a higher CSI value.

Mayor Gregor Robertson called Langley's CSI "alarming" but Fassbender said the use of CSI is just an ego boost for the Vancouver police.

"The reality is the CSI is a false measure of actual crime," said Fassbender.

"If we don't have a murder for three years then there's a gang shooting for two people outside our community, all of a sudden our CSI goes through the roof."

Fassbender said Vancouver police chief and board member Jim Chu, who drafted Wednesday's CSI report, acknowledges that the statistics are flawed.

"Chief Chu was in a meeting with me in the Metro police community at one point and we were talking about how false these statistics are and he even agreed with me," said Fassbender.

CARA MCKENNA/FOR METRO

Quoted

"The reality is the CSI is a false measure of actual crime."

Langley Mayor Peter Fassbender

Cody Legebokoff.
September 2013 trial set for accused serial killer

A trial date has been set in B.C. Supreme Court for a man accused of killing four women in northern B.C.

The trial of Cody Legebokoff will begin on Sept. 9, 2013, in Prince George.

Legebokoff is charged with four counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Prince George-area women who disappeared in the region starting in 2009.

Legebokoff, a Fort St. James native, was arrested Nov. 27, 2010, when an RCMP officer checked a suspicious vehicle that had just pulled onto a Prince George-area highway from an unused logging road.

When the vehicle's tracks were retraced along the snowy trail, officers found the body of 15-year-old Loren Donn Leslie, just hours after she had been killed — and even before her parents knew she was missing.

Further investigation linked the case to the discovery of 35-year-olds Jill Stuchenko and Cynthia Maas, in separate locations, but the body of the alleged fourth victim, 23-year-old Natasha Montgomery, has never been found.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Westshore Terminals' coal conveyor belt after a freighter smashed through 100 metres of it on Dec. 7. CONTRIBUTED BY STEPHEN BOHUS

Vancouver council questions coal-export expansion

On the waterfront.
City wants more information, resident input on growth

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

City council doesn't have much power when it comes to coal exports, but it wants to get the down-and-dirty details on a potential expansion all the same.

Vancouver council passed a motion Wednesday to have staff provide information on Port Metro Vancouver's two proposed coal-export expansion projects and the public consultation regarding the proposals by January 2013.

Should the expansion of the Fraser Surrey Docks and Neptune Terminals go through, Port Metro Vancouver could become the largest coal exporter in North America.

But council wants any expansion to be delayed until residents have a chance to give more input, as Mayor Gregor Robertson said in a letter to the port's CEO Robin Silvester last week.

The interest comes days after a coal freighter smashed through 100 metres of a conveyor belt and trestle at Westshore Terminals' Roberts Bank export terminal in Delta.

The vessel was empty and undamaged, but about 30 tonnes of coal that had been sitting idle on the belt fell into the Georgia Strait.

The accident proves that accidents "absolutely do happen," Coun. Adriane Carr said Wednesday, adding it's "very frustrating" to have a port on the city's waterfront that's under federal jurisdiction.

Yet port CEO Silvester emphasized the port's collaboration with the public and other stakeholders in a speech to the Board of Trade last week.

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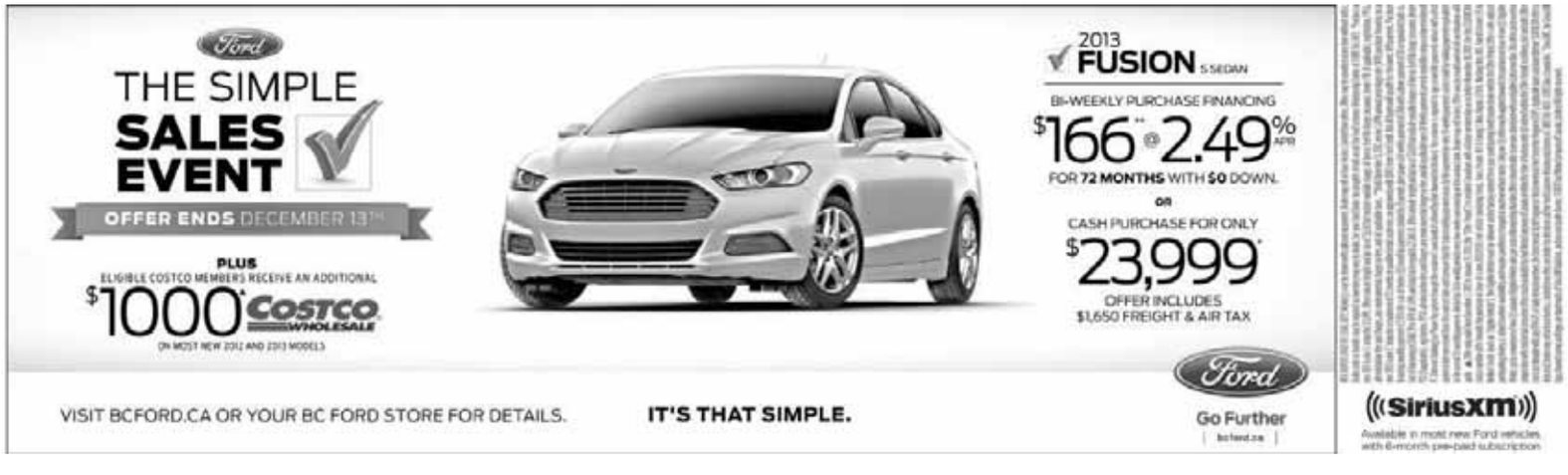

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Comic book writer Stan Lee is coming to Vancouver in April. FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES

Comic legend Stan Lee, Vader to visit Vancouver in 2013

Annual Fan Expo. Host of comic-book celebs slated for April 2013 event at the Vancouver Convention Centre

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS
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Spidey fans' senses will be tingling with excitement when comic legend Stan Lee comes to Vancouver for the 2013 Fan Expo.

Organizers have announced that the 89-year-old legendary co-creator of timeless comic book characters such as Spider-Man, the Avengers, the Hulk and X-Men will be appearing at the convention April 20 and 21.

Vancouver will be feeling the power of the dark side as David Prowse, the man who played the physical form of Darth Vader in the original Star Wars trilogy, will also be in attendance.

Terry Chui, a member of Star Wars costuming group 501st Legion, said he's been a fan since he was six.

"It's very exciting," the 41-year-old told Metro Wednesday. "It's a rare opportunity to meet someone from the original trilogy films. It's even more special and iconic that he's one of the most recognized villains in all of film."

"There's been a (big Star Wars) community in Vancouver and in Western Canada for quite some time, but there haven't been these big opportunities like Fan Expo for these guests to come and now we can express our fandom," Chui said.

Other guests set to appear at the event taking place at the Vancouver Convention Centre include The Walking Dead's Norman Reedus and Boondock Saints actor Sean Patrick Flanery.

The first Fan Expo Vancouver, which featured celebrity guests such as Adam West and Burt Ward (the original Batman and Robin), drew 16,780 fanboys and fangirls.

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Invisibility cloaks aren't just for fictional wizards

Quantum Stealth.
Local firm claims to have created fabric with illusion of invisibility for military applications

CARA MCKENNA
vancouver@metronews.ca

Harry Potter's cloak of invisibility may not be just a fictional wizard's garment anymore, according to a local camouflage expert.

Maple Ridge-based HyperStealth Biotechnology Corp. claims to have developed a fabric that creates an illusion of invisibility by bending light around a person or object.

The fabric is being called Quantum Stealth.

Guy Cramer, president and CEO of HyperStealth, said there have been similar inventions over the years but his is the only one with a 360-degree view.

He said he isn't able to discuss details or do demonstrations of Quantum Stealth for security reasons, but claims several military groups in Canada and the U.S. have expressed interest.

"We've also got a countermeasure for the device to be able to detect it," said Cramer.

"It (costs) about $100 to $200 per soldier, which is about what their uniforms are costing them right now."

Only mockup photos are currently available to the general public.

Colin Worth, a retired RCMP officer, said he went to Ottawa with Cramer to demonstrate Quantum Stealth in front of the Canadian Armed Forces. "I don't have a vested interest in the company or the technology, but I've seen it work," he said.

"The stumbling block last time I talked to Guy was how does he make it big enough and how does he make it portable enough to work in a real-life situation?"

Worth said that he signed a secrecy and confidentiality agreement so he isn't able to provide any details, but said "stuff just seems to disappear."

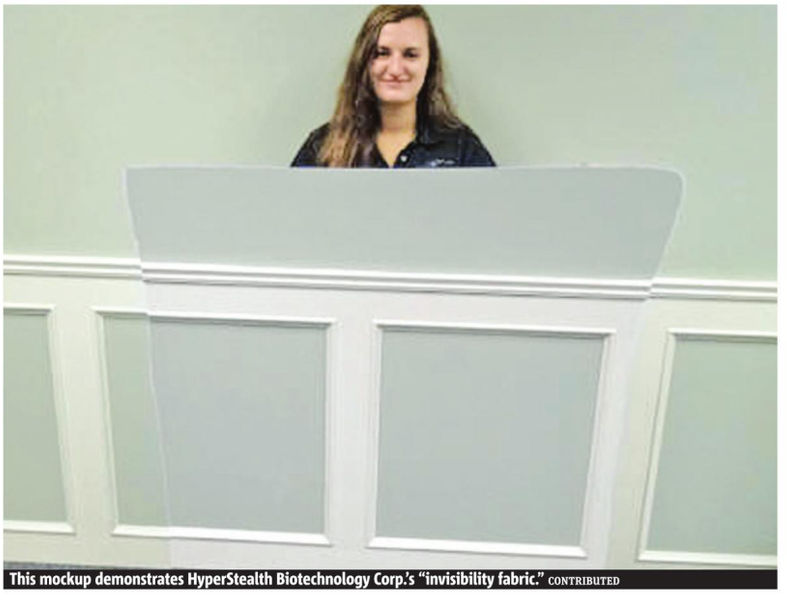
Bill Jarvis, a retired Navy Seal, also said he has seen the fabric work at U.S. Military Command meetings.

Cramer said that he would consider marketing Quantum Stealth to the general public only if the military allowed him to do so.

He hasn't been approached by any Harry Potter fans yet.

Quoted

"It's weird the way it works but it does work."
Retired RCMP officer Colin Worth



This mockup demonstrates HyperStealth Biotechnology Corp.'s "invisibility fabric." CONTRIBUTED

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UN war crimes tribunal convicts Bosnian Serb officer of genocide

Srebrenica massacre. 'Right hand' of Ratko Mladic found guilty of having lead role in 1995 murder of some 8,000 Muslim men and boys

A UN war crimes court convicted a former senior Bosnian Serb army commander Wednesday of genocide for playing a key role in Europe's worst massacre since the Second World War, and sentenced him to life imprisonment, delivering another measure of justice to survivors still hunting for the remains of their husbands and sons.

In a majority ruling, a three-judge panel at the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal said Gen. Zdravko Tolimir was the "right hand" of Bosnian Serb military chief Gen. Ratko Mladic, who is considered the chief architect of the murder of some 8,000 Muslim men and boys at the Srebrenica enclave in eastern Bosnia in July 1995.

"The accused not only had knowledge of genocidal intent of others but also possessed it himself," Presiding Judge Christoph Fluegge said. "He is therefore responsible for the crime of genocide."

Women who lost their menfolk in the massacre travelled to The Hague to watch the judgment and were pleased with the latest conviction.

"Finally, we witnessed a small bit of justice," said Munira Subasic, leader of a group called the Mothers of Srebrenica. "We are still alive to witness it and we are still searching for the bones of our sons."

Tolimir stood, crossed himself three times and removed his glasses but showed no emotion as Fluegge told him he had been convicted of genocide and would spend the rest of his life in prison.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"This is what we expected, and we feel better now. We hope the court will continue to conduct fair trials."

Srebrenica widow Rejha Avdic, 50, who lost her husband in the massacre.

In this photo taken Tuesday, survivors of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre hold photographs of male relatives who were killed, during a gathering in the northern Bosnian town of Tuzla, 149 kilometres north of Sarajevo. AMEL EMRIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1995

Bosnian Serb forces overran Srebrenica in 1995.

- **UN.** The presence of Dutch United Nations peacekeepers who were outgunned, outnumbered and who put up virtually no resistance did not deter the Bosnian Serbs. They later took over another UN-protected enclave in the nearby town of Zepa.
- **Massacre.** Women were bused away from the area before the Muslim men and boys were rounded up, taken to remote locations around the town and executed. Their bodies were then plowed into mass graves.

Egyptian Coptic blogger gets 3 years for blasphemy

A Cairo court on Wednesday convicted a Coptic Christian blogger who shared an anti-Islam film on social networking sites, and sentenced him to three years in prison for blasphemy and contempt of religion.

The case of Alber Saber is one of several seen by rights advocates as a campaign led by Egypt's ultra-conservative Islamists to curb free expression. Many of those targeted in the campaign are Christians, who make up about 10 per cent of Egypt's population of 85 million.

Saber was arrested Sept. 13 after neighbours complained he had shared on Facebook the amateur film made in the U.S. that sparked protests across the Muslim world. His arrest came during a wave of public outrage over the film, produced by an Egyptian-American Copt.

At the time, an angry mob surrounded Saber's house, calling for his death and accusing him of heresy, atheism and of promoting the Innocence of Muslims — the short film that portrays the Prophet Mohammed as a fraud, womanizer and buffoon.

Saber's verdict comes as Egypt has been plunged into a political crisis over a draft constitution. Islamist supporters say the charter is a step toward stability while critics warn it will open the door to increased suppression of freedom in the name of religion.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"This is an outrageous verdict and sentence for a person whose only 'crime' was to post his opinions online."

Amnesty International's Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, condemning the verdict and demanding Saber be freed immediately and that all charges against him be dropped.

Other convictions

- Last month, another Egyptian court convicted in absentia seven other Coptic Christians and a Florida-based pastor, sentencing them to death on charges linked to the Innocence of Muslims video.

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Gangnam Style makes top Google trends of 2012

Zeitgeist. Whitney Houston, Superstorm Sandy and Kate Middleton round out year-end list of high-traffic searches

The world's attention wavered between the tragic and the silly in 2012, and along the way, millions of people searched the web to find out about a royal princess, the latest iPad and a record-breaking skydiver.

Whitney Houston was the "top trending" search of the year, according to Google Inc.'s year-end "zeitgeist" report. Google's 12th-annual roundup is "an in-depth look at the spirit of the times as seen through the billions of searches on Google over the past year," the company said in a blog post Wednesday.

People around the globe searched en masse for news about Houston's accidental drowning in a bathtub just before she was to perform at a pre-Grammy Awards party in February.

Google defines topics as "trending" when they garner a high amount of traffic over a sustained period of time.

Korean rapper PSY's "Gangnam Style" music video trotted into second spot.

Superstorm Sandy, the damaging storm that knocked out power and flooded parts of the East Coast in the midst of a U.S. presidential campaign, was third.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What do you meme?

Facebook and Yahoo's top trending phrases (often labelled "memes") include:

- **YOLO.** It means "You Only Live Once" — meant both sincerely and ironically.
- **Binders full of women.** Mitt Romney describes his search for female cabinet members.

PSY of Gangnam Style fame in Miami Saturday. MICHAEL KOVAC/GETTY IMAGES

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The photo in the centre shows Jacob Tyler Roberts, the man behind a shooting at an Oregon Mall on Tuesday. Roberts killed two people and himself in the rampage. The photos on the left and right are victims Cindy Ann Yuille, 54, of Portland, Ore., and Steven Mathew Forsyth, 45, of West Linn, Ore. Another victim, Kristina Shevchenko, not shown, was wounded and is in serious condition. CLACKAMAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mall shooter, 22, used stolen rifle: Officials

Oregon slayings. Police say the weapon jammed, preventing more deaths

The hockey-mask-wearing gunman who killed two people and himself in a shooting rampage at a U.S. mall deep into the Christmas shopping season was 22 and used a stolen rifle from someone he knew, authorities said Wednesday.

Authorities said the death toll could have been worse: The rifle jammed and mall employees had been trained for the possibility of a mass shooting.

Jacob Tyler Roberts had armed himself with an AR-15 semiautomatic rifle and had several fully loaded magazines when he walked briskly into an Oregon mall on Tuesday afternoon and started firing at random, said Clackamas County Sheriff Craig Roberts.

The gunman then fled into a back hallway, down stairs and into a corner, where police found him dead from an apparently self-inflicted gunshot, authorities said.

The sheriff said authorities didn't yet have a motive.

Employees at the mall had been trained to run, hide, lock down and evacuate. Since previous mass shootings in the U.S., the first arriving police officers were trained to form teams and go inside instead of waiting for speciality teams.

A law-enforcement official told The Associated Press the shooter did not have a criminal record. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss details of an ongoing criminal investigation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gruesome scene

"I saw a gentleman face down, obviously shot in the head ... A lot of blood. You could tell there was nothing you could do for him."

Witness Jason DeCosta

Timeline

The shooting began when a masked man announced, "I am the shooter," said witness Austin Patty, 20.

- The mall Santa, Brance Wilson, said he heard gunshots and dove for the floor as Christmas music played.
- Witnesses said Roberts fired several times near the mall food court before running into Macy's.
- The first emergency call came at 3:29 p.m. Officers arrived a minute later. By 3:51 p.m., the victims and gunman had been found.

Etan Patz. Man charged in decades-old murder case retracts confession

The man charged with killing a six-year-old New York City boy in 1979 pleaded not guilty Wednesday to murder, even though police say he confessed in the sensational case that spawned the nationwide movement to publicize cases of missing children. Lawyers for the defendant say he made a false admission due to mental problems.

Fifty-one-year-old Pedro Hernandez wore a grey sweatsuit and answered "not guilty" at the hearing in the notorious case of Etan Patz.

The boy disappeared on his way to school on May 25, 1979, leading to an intensive search and garnering huge publicity. His photo was among the first put on milk cartons across the U.S., and his case turned May 25 into National Missing Children's Day.

"My client had no motive and no history," defence attorney Harvey Fishbein said outside court. "There is no crime scene. There are no witnesses."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Inclusion. University of Iowa allows applicants to list sexual orientation

The University of Iowa has become the first public U.S. university to include optional questions about sexual orientation and gender identity on its application, a move hailed Wednesday by advocates hoping to improve the college experience for gays and lesbians.

University officials say the move sends a strong signal that they value the diversity that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students bring to campus. They say that knowing some students' sexual orientation will allow them to track their enrolment and graduation rates and promote housing, student groups and programs that might improve their social and academic success.

Elmhurst College, a private school in Chicago, became the first — and is still the only other — college to do the same.

"This is a question whose time had come," university admissions director Michael Barron said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Alleged plot to murder Justin Bieber thwarted

Warning.
This story contains graphic details

Singer Justin Bieber at a Dec. 5 event in Philadelphia. An alleged plot to murder the singer in November was stopped by police. GETTY IMAGES FILE

A police affidavit alleges that two prison inmates and one of their nephews were hatching a plot to murder Bieber and his director of security while the singer was in New York for shows on Nov. 28 and 29.

Details of the grisly plan — which involved strangling two other victims with a paisley tie and then castrating them — were revealed Wednesday in an affidavit for arrest obtained by New Mexico State Police.

According to the affidavit, the plan was hatched behind bars after inmate Dana Martin was transferred from a Florida prison to the Southern New Mexico Corrections Facility in April.

Martin, 45, serving a life sentence for the rape and murder of a 15-year-old girl in Vermont, was reportedly obsessed with Bieber. He had written him letters and even had a tattoo of the singer on his leg.

He allegedly recruited Mark Aaron Staake, 41, a fellow inmate at the time, after Staake noticed the tattoo on his leg. The plan was to kill four people in two states, with Bieber as the main target.

Oddly, the details were spilled on Nov. 20, when Martin asked to speak to police, telling them Staake, who had been released on probation on Oct. 22, and his nephew, Tanner Ruane, 23, had been planning to commit the first two murders — neither of them Bieber. New Mexico police declined to identify those intended victims.

Martin is serving consecutive life sentences for murders committed in 2000. The strangulation murder of the 15-year-old girl was a "case of jealousy," police told The Associated Press.

Lt. Robert McDonald of the New Mexico State Police declined to speculate on why Martin revealed the plot to police when he did.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Suspected mastermind

- **Manipulator?** The police affidavit describes Martin as "a very good manipulator," who convinced Staake that he had access to large sums of money and a multimillion-dollar home and property, where Staake and Ruane could hide out.
- **Connections.** He also told Staake that he had connections to Chinese gangs in New York, who had "sanctioned" the murders, according to the affidavit.

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F-35 headache? Take 'reset' pill

Bombshell report.
Tories to review whole deal amid a warning costs could soar to $45.8 billion over 42 years

That F-35 headache just won't go away. Defence Minister Peter MacKay takes part in a Parliament Hill news conference on the controversial fighter jets on Wednesday. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Harper government has "hit the reset button" in the F-35 mess.

A bombshell report has exposed the cascading multi-ibillion-dollar cost of the stealth aircraft.

The long-awaited KPMG report warns the Lockheed Martin-built F-35s could cost Canada as much as $45.8 billion over 42 years.

The report says National Defence neglected to build a large enough financial cushion into the plan to replace Canada's aging fighter fleet.

And the paltry-by-comparison $9 billion the department set aside likely won't be enough to cover the planned purchase of 65 jets.

Now the entire process will be reviewed, Public Works Minister Rona Ambrose said Wednesday.

"The next step is a full review of options," Ambrose told a news conference.

"We have hit the reset button and are taking the time to do a complete assessment of all available options."

Defence Minister Peter MacKay said the government will ensure "that balance is maintained between the military needs and taxpayer interests.

"Ultimately, our government will get the best plane for the armed forces, for our pilots and for Canadian taxpayers."

The NDP's opposition critics were unmoved, however, insisting the government was steadfastly refusing to admit the whole process has been fumbled. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"What we haven't heard today is what we wanted to hear, that there will be an open competition for a replacement for the CF-18"

Matthew Kellway,
NDP procurement critic.

Angry UN warns N. Korea

The UN Security Council on Wednesday condemned North Korea's successful rocket launch and said it will urgently consider "an appropriate response."

Whether that includes new sanctions against the North — which the U.S. and its European allies are seeking — depends on China, the North's closest ally.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei said in Beijing the council's response should be "prudent and moderate and conducive to maintaining stability and avoiding escalation of the situation."

The Security Council said the launch violates council resolutions adopted after North Korea's nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009 and a ban on "any launch using ballistic missile technology."

The launch is widely seen as a test that takes North Korea one step closer to being capable of sending a nuclear-tipped warhead as far as California. North Korea says the rocket is meant to send a satellite into orbit. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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U.S. fiscal cliff imperils energy, mining sectors

Canadian fallout. Failure to reach deal would hit some types of companies especially hard, observers say

A plunge by Washington over the so-called fiscal cliff would hit Canadian miners and energy companies particularly hard since a slowdown in the U.S. economy would also drag down prices for base metals and oil.

Paul Taylor, chief investment officer for fundamental equities at BMO Asset Management, said Wednesday the cyclical sectors would be most affected if U.S. lawmakers fail to reach a deal to avoid the automatic tax hikes and spending cuts set to kick in next year.

"We are very much dependent on energy and materials which represent, of course, nearly 50 per cent of the Canadian equity market by market cap," Taylor said.

"And with slower U.S. — and read from that slower global economic activity — you would have to expect that the price of base metals and energy on which we depend so heavily would be affected negatively and they would certainly lose a bit." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Consumer concern

- A new poll by Sun Life Financial suggests 63 per cent of Canadians are concerned our economy will be hurt if a deal to avert the fiscal cliff is not reached.
- "Along with high debt levels and a slowing real estate market in Canada, the fiscal cliff situation in the U.S. is giving Canadians another reason to worry about the Canadian economy," said Sadiq Adatia, chief investment officer of Sun Life Global Investments.

Turning the page on e-readers

A young girl looks at a Sony ebook at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October in Frankfurt, Germany. Sales of dedicated e-reading devices are in an "alarmingly precipitous decline" this year after five years of rapid growth, research firm IHS iSuppli says. Full-blown tablets with colour screens are behind the decline, the firm says. IHS expects shipments of e-readers to fall from 23.2 million last year to 14.1 million this year. The rapid rise and now rapid decline of e-readers is unusual even for the volatile consumer electronics industry, says IHS analyst Jordan Selburn, but it's indicative of the broader trend of single-purpose devices like e-readers and cameras losing out to general-purpose ones like tablets and smartphones. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Social media.

Facebook attempts to make privacy controls more user-friendly

Facebook is trying to make its privacy controls easier to find and understand in an effort to turn the world's largest social network into a more discreet place.

The fine-tuning announced Wednesday will include several revisions that will start rolling out to Facebook Inc.'s more than one billion users in the next few weeks.

The biggest change will be a new "privacy shortcuts" section that will appear as a tiny lock on the right-hand side at the top of people's news feeds. This feature offers a drop-down box where users will be able to get answers to common questions such as "Who can see my stuff?"

Other updates will include a tool that will allow individuals to review all the publicly available pictures identifying them on Facebook. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Safety concerns

Honda recalls 870,000 vehicles

Honda is recalling about 870,000 minivans and SUVs worldwide because they can roll away even though drivers have removed the keys from the ignition.

The recall announced Wednesday affects older-model vehicles sold mainly in the U.S. but also includes a total of 52,441 in Canada. They were big sellers with families because of their ample space and reputation for quality.

Honda Canada says the recall will involve approximately 23,300 Honda Odyssey and 12,400 Honda Pilot vehicles from the 2003-2004 model years and about 16,600 Acura MDX vehicles from the 2003-2006 model years in Canada.

"Honda Canada has received several complaints about such failures in these vehicles, but has received no reports of accidents or injuries related to this issue," the company said.

The mechanism that locks the key in the ignition while the vehicles are in gear can wear out. When that happens, drivers can remove keys without shifting into park. Some have left the vehicles, which have rolled off while in gear. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Air travel

Cocktails put the fun back in flying

U.S. airlines have found a way to take the edge off the stress of flying and make a few extra bucks along the way: Fancy new cocktails, craft beers and elegant wines.

Virgin America offers Grandma's Coffee, an iced cappuccino with Jack Daniels whiskey for $9 US. Its beer selection includes San Francisco-based 21st Amendment and Black Star from Whitefish, Mont. Both cost $7. US Airways has partnered with mixer company Stirrings to sell mojitos and cosmos for $8 each.

Delta offers the Sky Breeze, which is vodka, Fresca and a splash of cranberry-apple juice over ice for $7. It also sells small-batch bourbon from Woodford Reserve for $7.

Other airlines create drinks to get travellers into the mindset of their destination. United sells a Trader Vic's Mai Tai for $9 on flights to and from Hawaii.

"It's simply a matter of finding a way to get people to spend money," says Henry Harteveldt, a travel industry analyst with Hudson Crossing. "They see people spending $12, $14, $15 or more for fancy martinis, cosmopolitans or other beverages on the ground."

Flying isn't what it used to be. Long lines, ever-changing security rules and limited overhead bin space have all made travelling much more stressful. It's no wonder many passengers look for a little escape. Airlines, which created much of this anxiety, are happy to oblige.

The specialty drinks are part of a larger push to get passengers to pay for a little in-flight luxury. Fliers can now opt for more legroom, Internet access or even shorter security lines, all for an extra fee. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

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Friends, Romulans, countrymen! Lend me your pointy ears. I come not to bury Star Trek (frankly, Voyager did that), but to praise it.

Star Trek: The Next Generation is on Netflix now, and I'm completely engaged. To my surprise and delight, many of my Facebook friends have independently made it their priority No. 1, and it's resulted in the sort of long, passionate comment threads usually only seen under shared photos of ultrasounds and/or Stephen Harper.

I've complained in this space before that too much modern pop culture is just the repackaging of ideas we've seen before. But I can't deny the movies I've been anticipating most lately: Bobcaygeon The Movie (documentary based on a rock ballad); Les Miserables (movie adaptation of a musical adaptation of a French musical adaptation of a novel); and Star Trek Into Darkness (sequel of a reboot of a movie version of a TV series).

TNG regeneration

Going back to the future is a pleasant reminder of my not-so-dazed-and-confused youth — I get older, the Enterprise crew stay the same age.

I can get all snobby at Men in Black 3, but if it's John's Crap: The Sequel, then my objections mysteriously disappear. In truth, if they made a movie of The Wire, I'd probably show up in costume (rumpled suit with vomit stains).

So, I apologize for my earlier complaints. Star Trek: Regurgitation is just fine by me.

I was the perfect age for the original run of TNG — 11 years old when it debuted as a juvenile imitation of the original series, and 17 when it was over, by then a Hugo Award-winning masterpiece beloved by virgins worldwide. So going back to the future is a pleasant reminder of my not-so-dazed-and-confused youth — I get older, the Enterprise crew stay the same age.

In a world where people no longer meet in town halls and churches, some of us get our sense of community by discussing the legends of Vulcans or Orcs or hard-drinking ad execs. Whether that's a step forward or back I'll leave to you.

But what fun to get lost in the minutia of a 24th century where anything can happen except good roles for women. How wonderful to laugh at the stuff they got wrong (Picard's personal computer is amusingly thick) and got right (Picard and Riker discuss a European union). How satisfying to gauge a fellow Trekker's knowledge level by their recognition of "Make it so" (beginner), "THERE. ARE. FOUR. LIGHTS!" (intermediate), and "All Husnock — everywhere" (expert).

My excitement led me to decide that I'm going to watch every worthwhile Star Trek episode, which after several hours perusing reviews and ratings online I've determined is 30 episodes of the original, six episodes of the animated series, 54 episodes of TNG, 69 of DS9, 29 of Voyager and 25 of Enterprise. (I just hope the experience doesn't turn me into a nerd.)

It's good to boldly go where I've already been before.

Taking us out of here, again: The cast of Star Trek: The Next Generation.
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Love is sweeter by the dozen

KIN CHEUNG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

12/12/12 SWAK

Last triple-date to wed your mate

A couple kiss during a mass wedding ceremony at the Peak in Hong Kong, on Wednesday. At least 700 couples were expected to get married on the date 12/12/12, the last such triple-date in this year in Hong Kong as they believe the date will bring them everlasting love. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

When the clock strikes 12:12

Twelve-word vows say it all

KEITH SRAKOCIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Federal Judge Donetta Ambrose, left, signals that there are five more minutes before she starts the wedding between Deputy U.S. Marshal Brian Allen, centre, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Amy Johnson in federal court in Pittsburgh on Wednesday. Ambrose started their wedding at 12:12 p.m. at the couple's request, where they exchanged 12-word vows on 12/12/12. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Chinese numerology

"One is considered a yang number, while two is considered a yin number. Combining the two can offer new couples balance."

Marketing firm Back Bar USA in a press release announcing its $1,212,120 Las Vegas wedding package that included the use of a private jet, watches and earrings for the wedding party, and dinner at a Michelin-rated restaurant.

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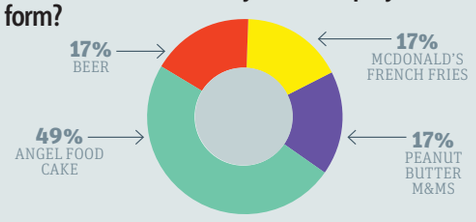
Pizza Hut is making a pizza-scented perfume. What other foods would you like in spray-on form?



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@BTArchitects: RT @cathaypacificca: Congrats to HKG born, BC Architect Bing Thom for being chosen to design the new Chinese Opera House in Hong Kong...

@BCBridgeCulture: Ne PM 10 lanes making the morning commute from Surrey a rush! Poor Pattullo getting toll avoiders?

@CityHallWchVAN: #Coal export motion on consultation request passes Council @AdrianeCarr #VanPoli #Climate #Tankers

@Miss604: #SkyTrain turned 26 years old yesterday. Here's what I wrote for its 25th birthday last year: http://ow.ly/g3l0D

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Don Juan: Three songs, two duels and one trip to hell

Roguish fun. The Blackbird Theatre revamps the tale of the world's most famous womanizing swordsman

BACKSTAGE PASS
Graeme McRanor
vancouver@metronews.ca

Don Juan at The Cultch runs from Dec. 26 to Jan. 26. CONTRIBUTED

You're so vain, you probably think this play is about you

Let's get something straight: Don Juan is not about you.

It's not about me, either.

The truth is most guys fancy themselves as some kind of Don Juan, the infamous swordsman and seducer invented by Moliere in 1665.

The reality is much different, of course.

For example, I wasn't born until 1970. And I rarely flourish a sword or blouse.

But let's get serious, ladies: this is an ageless tale about a wildly intelligent, courageous, charming and, yes, womanizing rogue.

Sure he's 350 years old now but Blackbird Theatre's upcoming production has been revisited and revamped by award-winning director John Wright, who has our beloved Don defying heaven and hell.

Oh. My. God.

The production, in fact, features three songs, two duels and one trip to hell. That's a theatrical full-pull in my book.

Peter Jorgensen stars as Mr. Juan; Simon Webb as his beleaguered servant. New music composed by Peter Berring; old music by Mozart, performed by the play's leading men.

Blackbird Theatre presents Don Juan at The Cultch from Dec. 26 to Jan. 26. Visit thecultch.com or blackbirdtheatre.ca for more information.

Jason Bonham's Led Zeppelin Experience — well, his dad was in the band and he's played with them, too — so why not get the Led out on one of his own tours?

Jason Bonham offers up this limited engagement to commemorate the passing of his father, John.

The show features Jason on drums, Tony Catania on guitar and theremin, Stephen Leblanc on keyboards/pedal-steel guitars, Dorian Heartsong (in for Michael Devlin) on bass and James Dylan on lead vocals. A must for any Zeppelin fan, it's probably the closest you'll even get to a live performance.

But, hey, never say never, I suppose. This one's getting good reviews and goes down at the Commodore Feb. 13. Tickets start at $57.50, on sale now.

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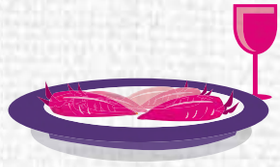

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Do you hear what we hear?

Weighing up this year's festive albums. As usual, the latest holiday releases are a mixed bag, but Metro helps you sort the naughty from the nice

PAT HEALY
Metro World News in Boston

Sufjan Stevens' version of Christmas is an alternative one. ALL IMAGES HANDOUT

A Different Kind of Christmas – Various artists

Naughty: You're probably not familiar with many of the artists on these 23 tracks. Audio Stepchild? Renzo Charlez? Fresh-wadda Brooks? Have all of these great hip-hop artists been hiding on the North Pole until now?

Nice: This compilation comes courtesy of Hoopla Worldwide/LRT/INgrooves Fontana ... all imprints we had also never heard of before now. But some of the participants have affiliations with Parliament Funkadelic and Nappy Roots. The beats here mostly have a G-Funk feel with little samples of carols thrown in and the rhymes are super positive. Check out 1st Blood and Buffalo Stille's Some Kentucky Bourbon on Christmas Eve and Da Product and J Bill's It Seems Like We Forgot for some of the most festive holiday hip-hop since Run DMC's Christmas in Hollis.

Silver & Gold: Songs for Christmas, Vols. 6-10 – Sufjan Stevens

Naughty: Is Sufjan Stevens trying to take up all our free time this season? Sure, this is a gorgeous collection of 58 holiday-ish tracks (we say "ish" because how is Prince's Alphabet Street a holiday song?). But keep in mind that Stevens recorded these songs over six years. Listeners may want to pace themselves too.

Nice: There are a few songs on here that are the sonic equivalent of sugar plums dancing in your head. Draw the curtains, plug in your tree and zone out to the beautifully textured 10-minute plus opuses Christmas Unicorn and The Child with the Star on His Head.

Cheers, It's Christmas – Blake Shelton

Naughty: His role as a coach on The Voice has earned Blake Shelton a new base of fans who wouldn't ordinarily like his brand of country music. That said, if you don't ordinarily like his brand of country music, you won't like this album.

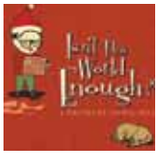
The Grinch says ...

- **This Christmas – John Travolta and Olivia Newton John**

If this collection came out in 1980 then maybe there would be a reason for it to exist, but in 2012 there's no need for these 13 tracks. The forced smiles while sipping cocoa on the cover shows that their old chemistry is now gone. We don't like to be Grinchy, but this is the sonic equivalent of reindeer poop.

Nice: Shelton is such a likable personality that this is highly tolerable stuff. Plus, he handpicked some of the most likable side-kicks to guide his sleigh, like Reba, Kelly Clarkson, his wife Miranda Lambert and the king of palatable Christmas charisma, Michael Bublé, who co-wrote one of the songs here. Basically, the cover pic of Shelton in front of the fireplace says it all: It's old-fashioned, steeped in tradition, comfortable and not exactly cool.

Isn't This World Enough? – Various Artists



Naughty: The problem with this post-record industry climate is that there aren't enough Scroogey label CEOs to say, "Yer holiday song stinks!" Therefore, this 14-song comp from the Nettwerk Music Group has a few stinkers from Ash Koley and Jay Brannan. Bah humbug!

Nice: The title track, by the Scottish six-piece Admiral Fallow, might not be the most obvious holiday song (sample lyric: "You don't need to hang your hat on belief in bumper stickers") but there's something classic about it that makes it malleable, the way that Put a Little Love In Your Heart kind of became a holiday staple after it was used in Scrooged. Also worth noting: This compilation kicks off with a rockin' Fun. tune!

Holidays Rule – Various Artists

Naughty: Speaking of compilations that start with a song by Fun., the We Are Young trio have spread themselves too thin for the holidays. With their track, they take a Sleigh Ride down Broadway and make an ill-advised turn into '80s territory. Rufus Wainwright and Sharon Van Etten also deserve a lump of coal for their empty version of Baby, It's Cold Outside.

Nice: This one delivers the most bang for your buck. The Shins run McCartney's Wonderful Christmastime through a Beach Boys filter and turn it into something great. McCartney himself is on here too. Other great performances include Calexico, Eleanor Friedberger and Andrew Bird.

Merry Christmas, Baby – Rod Stewart

Naughty: Stewart exhumes the voice of Ella Fitzgerald for a duet of What Are You Do-ing New Year's Eve? Let's just hope there is no "live" performance, a la Virtual 2Pac.

Nice: Rod's light rock swing is actually contagious, and you may find yourself saying, "Hey, play that again!" about the original song that Stewart co-wrote, Red-Suited Super Man. Then you'll realize what you just said and lie that you were just kidding. Cee-Lo, Mary J. Blige, Bublé and Trombone Shorty also turn in notable cameos.

Sounds of the Holidays Vol. One – The Polyphonic Spree

Naughty: The Polyphonic Spree are known for featuring upward of 20 members, but leader Tim DeLaughter doesn't quite maximize the potential of all of his choral worker elves here.

Nice: Though many of these 13 tracks are familiar songs, the Spree drastically reimagine many of them to great effect. Silver Bells, featuring School of the Seven Bells, is a dreamy seven-minute symphony that captures the exhausting wonder of the season through the sleepy eyes of a child.

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I dream a dream ... of winning an Oscar

Les Misérables. How exactly does a costume designer go about dressing three A-list actors in three roles of a lifetime?

RICHARD PECKETT
richard.peckett@metro.lu

"We used a vibrant red dress, which was particularly striking styled with (Anne Hathaway's) short cropped hair," Delgado says.

Les Misérables hasn't hit theatres yet, but there's already talk of Academy Awards.

"The whole thing is a very big tour de force for an Oscar," says its costume designer Paco Delgado, who has worked on critical hits such as Bad Education and The Skin I Live In.

Delgado thinks that the early rave reviews come down to the fact that it's the first film version of a musical to feature live recording as opposed to lip synched performances of pre-recorded songs.

But the movie's starry team might also have something to do with it. The Oscar winner Tom Hooper, best known for The King's Speech, directed Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe and Anne Hathaway in what critics are calling roles of a lifetime.

"When Anne Hathaway sang I Dreamed a Dream, I was moved to tears," Delgado said.

Delgado talked Metro through how he underscored the movie's three most emotive performances with costume.

The inspiration

"Costumes always have a theatrical kind of feeling, whereas clothes are very real, and what I tried to do with this movie is to get into the skin of the character whom I'm dressing," Delgado explains.

Anne Hathaway: Distressed clothes

You'd have to be living under a rock to have missed all the entertainment headlines about Anne Hathaway's 25 pound weight loss for her role as the tragic emaciated Fantine. It turns out the clothes went through the ringer as well.

"We would sand down the fabrics and bleach the materials," he explains. "And we even used blow torches to make the clothes look as though they'd been through a lot of stress," says Delgado.

"Fantine starts outs as a pretty girl in cotton mousseline dresses, which are old but still pretty, and gradually we introduce coarser materials to show her descent into prostitution," says the designer.

"He wears a uniform pretty much for the entire film," Delgado says of Russell Crowe.

Anne Hathaway

Les Mis in numbers

2,200
costumes in total

1,500
historic outfits made from scratch

$1.1 M
spent on wardrobe overall

Hugh Jackman: Bringing the lowly to life

Hugh Jackman's Jean Valjean is a former convict and an outcast. So Delgado used "blood red rags, rough linens and materials like hessian and hemp to reflect his social position and discomfort."

"After he breaks parole, Valjean becomes more sophisticated in his dress, particularly during his ascension to village mayor," Delgado explains.

Russell Crowe: Dressing a black soul

"He wears a uniform pretty much for the entire film. So he's not the most interesting character (to dress) in that respect," Delgado says. "Russell really wanted to show a man who was becoming bitter with age, so we decided to gradually darken his uniform until it was almost as black as his soul."

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Photo: Laurence Labat Costume: Mérédith Caron © 2012 Cirque du Soleil

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

The year in celebrity divorces

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

Yesterday we looked at the big celebrity engagements of 2012. (Aw, love!) So today we'll gaze at the years big celebrity divorces. (Boo, dead love!)

Katy Perry and Russell Brand
Announcement: Dec. 30 (so technically this occurred in 2011 but the fallout was in 2012. Work with me here, folks)
Length of marriage: 14 months
Reason: "She's young, successful and dedicated," Brand said of Perry and her career in an interview with Howard Stern in July. "(The reality is) you can't fully understand it until you do it. I was really into the idea of marriage and having children." Translation: The recovering alcoholic wanted to settle down; she wanted to party.
Contention level: Low. Instead of anger, Perry just seems embarrassed she was ever associated with the comedian. She recently hid under a table to avoid seeing him while she was having lunch with new beau John Mayer.

Heidi Klum and Seal
Announcement: Jan. 23
Length of marriage: 7 years
Reason: Klum was apparently disturbed about Seal's "inability to control his temper."
Contention level: High. The two are currently involved in a very bitter custody dispute over their four children and Klum's estimated $70 million fortune.

Katie Holmes and Tom Cruise
Announcement: June 29
Length of marriage: 5 years
Reason: Cruise was reportedly blindsided by Holmes' highly orchestrated divorce proceedings. One reason for the split? Us Weekly claims that the couple "fought viciously" over Scientology parenting.
Contention level: Medium. The divorce was fast and furious (by comparison, Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries are still in negotiations). Cruise seems sad; Holmes ecstatic. And Suri is still well-dressed.

Amy Poehler and Will Arnett
Announcement: Sept. 6
Length of marriage: 9 years
Reason: Their romance "fizzled out," RadarOnline.com reported.
Contention level: Low. They are too adorable to be mad at one another.

Lindsay Lohan. ALL PHOTOS GETTY

Lohan won't follow Max and The Wanted

Lindsay Lohan has put an end to her gallivanting with on-the-road British boy band The Wanted, cancelling plans to follow the group to London and then Dubai, according to E! News.

Some suspected the change of plans was caused by Lohan's legal troubles, but the starlet is allowed to leave the country while on probation. Perhaps it's because her recent infatuation with Wanted member Max George reportedly isn't all that serious. "All they're doing is hanging out," a source says.

Twitter

@KChenoweth
No one will see Paranormal Activity 4 with me.

@RealMichelleT
What would the Dowager Countess do?

@msleamichele
Another great day of work at #glee! Time to get some rest now! Another big day tomorrow! Xoxo

@rustyrockets
"@JonahHill: Ok so I've decided I'm going to get married soon, I'm just not sure to who yet" I'm free.

Florence Welch

Florence the peacemaker at recent concert

Florence + the Machine singer Florence Welch turned peacemaker at a recent concert in Scotland, halting the show when she spotted two fans quarreling in the front row, according to Us Weekly. "I can't have a fight in front of me while I'm singing this song! No fighting allowed," she said. "I don't know what's happening but I'd like it to stop. It doesn't matter whose fault it is." Others in the crowd weren't pleased with the interruption and had begun chuckling nervously, causing Welch to chide them as well: "Excuse me, all of you. Stop it," she said. "I'm sorry all of you if you're upset." Welch then hopped off stage and hugged one of the fighting girls who appeared to be crying.

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Bask in Rita's aura

Jay-Z's protege spills about her two-tone lip, her knack for nurturing her locks and her long-standing love for Lopez

ROMINA McGUINNESS
life@metronews.ca

No one rocks a strong brow and bold lip quite like Rita Ora does. And so we felt compelled to pick her brain about her trademark look. In the process, Jay-Z's protege gave us a few tips on how to rock a two-tone red pout and the celebrity (it's J.Lo!) whose complexion she covets the most.

On her morning routine...
"In the day, it takes about 10 to 15 minutes (to put my makeup on). If I don't have to wear makeup, I don't. I don't mind being caught on camera bare-faced. And I think having healthy, glowing skin is really important. On off days, I'll wear bronzer and a lipstick, but that's it. A red lip and black liquid eyeliner would be my easiest look. It looks good on blondes — but this is all bleached! "

...and fancy, get-dressed-up, evening ritual
"If I have an event, I might stick some lashes on and maybe put on some golden, bronzy eye shadow, something to make my eyes stand out a bit more. But in the evening, it takes me probably about 25 minutes to do my makeup — if I'm doing it properly. Do you know what I'm doing right now? The other day, I wore a dress that had pink and red, so I made my top lip pink and my bottom lip red. That was quite cool. We invented that with my makeup artist. Or you can do bright red on the outside and dark red on the inside and blend it all together. The main thing is making your skin look flawless, like you have no makeup on."

She's not a natural blonde, but a natural beauty? No question. HANDOUT

Face the facts

"J.LO is my skin idol, I love her. Is that really crazy? Do I sound like a psychopath?"
Rita Ora

Her skin care before bed
"I wash my face every night and use Crème de la Mer moisturizing soft cream as it makes my skin feel nice. But my skin isn't too bad actually."

The hair: to spray or not to spray
"(My hair) takes a lot of work. I used to have really long hair, but when I started dying it and using curling irons and stuff, it dried it out. I'd literally have a hair spray in my bag, which isn't good. Now I use clip-ins so that I don't damage my own hair. I also do a lot of treatments — a lot of oils and masks. But your hair will only absorb so much oil. You also have to eat good. So I eat things like fish for the oils."

Lipstick or lip gloss?
"I love a strong lip. I would see women like Marilyn Monroe and Gwen Stefani with red lips and they never looked like they gave a s—t about what anyone had to say about them. They had such confidence. They were just hot and sexy and not afraid to be different. When I put red lipstick on, I want to be like them."

About that tan
(I feel the most beautiful) when I've got a tan!

Her beauty icons
"Kim Kardashian has good makeup. But J.LO is my skin idol, I love her. Is that really crazy? Do I sound like a psychopath? My mum's really good with makeup. She always has a different look. She used to say, 'Don't do a lip and an eye. Pick one.' I follow her advice ... sometimes."

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Christmas card clutter solutions

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

If you are the popular type then you probably get lots of Christmas cards sent to you each holiday season.

One of the most asked questions I get during the holidays is what to do with the cards and how to creatively display them.

I remember as a kid my Mom would string them up across our window in the living room. She'd poke them into the edges of painting and mirror frames; basically ridding them of tabletops in order to make room for trays of hard candy and nuts.

I've seen cards lined up on mantels, window ledges and credenzas, stuck to the fridge door and draped on a ribbon around door frames.

For a family home that might look charmingly chaotic, it's important to create order with decor, and greeting cards are no exception.

As a designer type, I am always conscious of displaying things around my home that add to my decor — especially during the holidays. Here's a few ways that inspire me to proudly put those warm wishes on display.

Jolly Reindeer Photo Holder

At almost three–feet tall, I'd stand this hand-painted fellow in my front foyer as a greeter to guests when they arrive. $40, pier1.ca.

Card Keeper

Got keepsake cards? Store them away neatly (it's also a good way to remember who sent you cards from year to year). $12, crateandbarrel.com.

Holiday Card Holder

Organize 60 cards horizontally on a hallway wall or vertically beside the Christmas tree. $65, potterybarn.com.

Idea: lay your holiday greeting cards in a decorative tray and display on a coffee table. Allow guests to sift through them as desired.
PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Greeting Card Etiquette

- Display your cards into common groups: work related, family and friends.
- At the end of the season, gather all cards and store them with holiday decorations for next year. You'll then have an auto-list of people to send cards to.
- Up-cycle last year's extra-beautiful cards and use the front plackets as instant name tags for gifts. Just make sure there is no writing on the inside front.
- If someone sends you a card and its too late in the season to return one to them, send them a "thank you for thinking of me card" in the new year.
- Always include your return address on the envelope and sign the card with your first and last name. This ensures the receiver knows who it came from.

Cleaning

Holiday spills? Check the napkin stain chart

I hate dealing with dinner napkin stains, so I tend to use paper instead, but my family hates paper napkins and is always pushing me to use my cloth napkins. First, is it OK to use paper and secondly if I use my cloth napkins how do I get the food stains out?

CHARLES THE BUTLER
askcharlesthebutler@metronews.ca
For more, visit charlesmacpherson.com

As the hostess, you can use what ever you like. Paper or cloth, it's your choice. However, cloth is always so much nicer.

So here are a few tips to make life easier. Remember, when washing your dinner napkins, you need to get the stain out before they end up in the dryer, so keep a close eye out for this.

Soaking your napkins overnight with the formulas below also really helps. Also, remember to always treat the stains as soon as possible.

Christmas napkin stain chart

Gravy
Scrape off excess, blot with paper towel, soak fabric for several hours in one cup cold water and one tablespoon liquid enzyme detergent. Rinse with clear water and launder normally as per fabric label.

Cranberry Sauce
Scrape off excess, rinse with lukewarm water, sponge with solution of a quarter teaspoon of PH neutral dish soap and half a cup of warm water. Rinse with clear water and launder normally as per fabric label.

Lipstick
Scrape off excess, dampen stain with PH neutral dish soap and rub stain between thumb and forefinger, rinse with warm water, repeat until stain is removed and launder normally as per fabric label.

Chocolate
Scrape off excess, rinse from the back and rub a liquid enzyme detergent into chocolate and let soak for 30 minutes in cold water, then rinse and launder normally as per fabric label.

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From turntable to coffee table: Vintage holiday decor

Forget Bing Crosby's classic White Christmas. For me, Christmastime will forever be evoked by David Cassidy crooning My Christmas Card to You, and I still have the 1972 Partridge Family holiday record album to prove it.

The music has long since been transferred to my iPod, but the rest of my family can stand only so much of Cassidy's oddly melancholy rendition of Frosty the Snowman. So I came up with another way to get my fix of nostalgia: I reproduced the album cover art on a tile coaster that now resides on my coffee table, not my parents' old turntable. In fact, I had enough vintage albums to make a set of four holiday coasters, and at a cost of 15 cents per tile, can afford to make more to give to my sister.

But why stop there? I'm also awfully fond of my 1973 Little Golden Book versions of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and Frosty the Snowman, and I get out my battered copies every year. But the books end up lost amid my son's enormous collection, so I came up with a way to make them part of our holiday decor.

Instead of shrinking the covers as I did for the albums, I enlarged them a bit to fit 8-by-10-inch canvases and hung them on the wall. Slapping a print into a frame would be even easier, but I had the blank canvas on hand and didn't want to buy a new frame. I may be a hopeless sap during the holidays, but I'm also thrifty.

A handmade drink coaster inspired by vintage Christmas albums.
HOLLY RAMER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A decorative wall hanging inspired by vintage Christmas books.
HOLLY RAMER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Record album coasters

Materials

- Record album covers
- Scanner or digital camera
- Printer
- Craft knife and metal ruler or scissors
- Spray adhesive or adhesive tape (I used a Scotch-brand Advanced Tape Glider)
- Ceramic tiles, approximately 4-by-4 inches
- Clear enamel topcoat (I used Rust-oleum Crystal Clear Enamel)
- Felt, cut to the size of the coasters

Instructions

1. Take a picture of your album cover. Scanning it would also work, but most small, desktop scanners won't be big enough to scan the entire cover in one pass. It's best to stand the album up on a shelf against a wall, so you can get a straight-on view for a photo.
2. Use photo-editing or word-processing software to crop and re-size the image to fit your tile. Print the image, then trim it to size using the craft knife or scissors.
3. Use adhesive tape or spray adhesive to glue the image to the tile. Many online tutorials call for using Mod Podge, a type of decoupage medium, for this kind of project, but I find it messy. And because it is water-based, the finished coasters likely will not stand up to moisture or heat from a cold beverage glass or warm mug.
4. Allow adhesive to dry thoroughly, following product directions. Working outdoors, apply several light coats of the clear enamel spray, again following the product directions for how long to wait between coats.
5. Glue squares of felt to the underside of the tiles to prevent the rough surface from scratching your table.
6. Allow the finished coaster to dry for at least several days before using.

Book cover canvases

Materials

- Vintage books
- Scanner or digital camera
- Printer
- Craft knife or scissors
- Spray adhesive or adhesive tape
- Blank 8-by-10-inch canvas
- Optional: acrylic craft paint

Instructions:

1. Scan or take a picture of your book cover. If scanning, scan at a high resolution (600 ppi) so you can print an enlarged copy without harming the image quality. If taking a picture, use the highest resolution on your camera.
2. Use photo-editing or word-processing software to crop and re-size the image to fit your canvas. (Alternatively, you can simply create a duplicate image that you can print and frame).
3. Print the image, then trim it to size. I chose to print my book cover on high-quality photo paper to get the best image possible.
4. If desired, paint the edges of the canvas a colour that matches your book cover. Let dry.
5. Use adhesive tape or spray to glue the image onto the canvas.
6. If desired, spray the finished canvas with a clear sealant. I chose not to, since it will be hanging up for just a few weeks each year, and I wasn't particularly worried about the image fading or getting damaged.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DIY DECOR TIP: UPCYCLED HOLIDAY BULBS

STEVEN AND CHRIS HOLIDAY EPISODES ARE NOW AIRING THROUGH DEC. 24, MONDAY TO FRIDAY AT 2 P.M. THEIR ROSTER OF EXPERTS DELIVER IDEAS AND ADVICE ON TOPICS INCLUDING HOME DECOR, FOOD AND ENTERTAINING, HEALTH AND FITNESS AND MORE.

It happens every year: You untangle your holiday lights only to find that half aren't working.

Don't toss 'em out quite yet; upcycle those burnt out bulbs into a fabulously festive centerpiece!

Directions

1. Decant various shades of glitter into separate bowls.
2. Using a small artist's brush, apply glue to the entire glass portion of each bulb.
3. Dip bulb in one of the bowls of glitter and roll around, ensuring that glue is completely covered with glitter.
4. Repeat steps two and three with remaining bulbs.
5. Allow bulbs to fully dry separately before displaying together in a large decorative bowl on a bed of fake snow.

Materials

- Holiday light bulbs
- Various shades of glitter, divided
- White glue
- Artist's brush
- Large Decorative bowl
- Fake snow

Don't just throw away those burnt-out Christmas lights. SUBMITTED

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Anitra Mecadon, host of DIY Network's Mega Dens. HANDOUT

Creating guest bedrooms where there aren't any

DIY ideas. Make guests feel welcome at your home this holiday season and into the new year

With the holidays around the corner, preparing for overnight guests is inevitable.

Rather than looking at your lack of guest suites as a challenge, consider these ideas for incorporating guest beds into functional living spaces.

Hideaway beds
Fold up the hideaway bed stereotype in your head — newer versions of this classic space saver are both more comfortable and easier to use.

Including one of these in a contemporary cabinet provides an attractive solution for overnight guests without taking up any additional space.

Wall dividers
Make the most of a room by using a wall divider to separate a guest bedroom from a room you are already using such as a home office or gym.

Using mirrored panels or patterned dividers make the room stylish for your use and your guests when they arrive.

Small spaces
Look at the unused nooks and crannies in your home that could be serving a more creative purpose.

For instance, building a simple platform underneath the stairs can easily provide room for a futon or air mattress without invading the space you already have.

Trundle beds
Doubling as a great solution for kids' sleepovers, a trundle bed is two beds that take the space of one. The second bed is tucked underneath and rolls out when needed.

This is a great solution for additional guests that doesn't take up any extra space in your home.

Moveable partitions
If you have no choice but to sleep guests in high traffic areas of your home, installing a partition will provide the necessary privacy.

Consider moving bookshelves or glass doors that will keep an open feeling and won't entirely divide the overall room.

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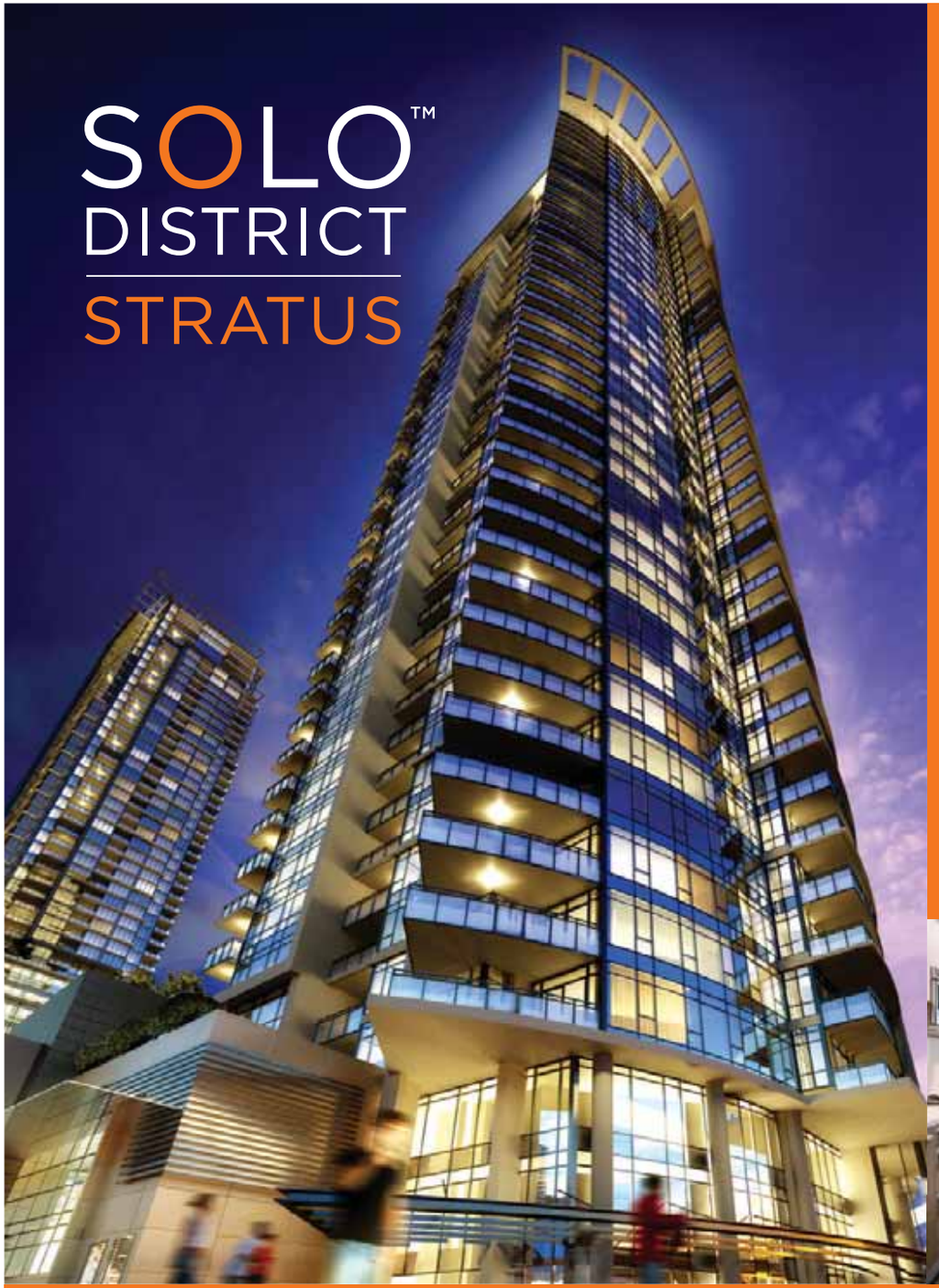

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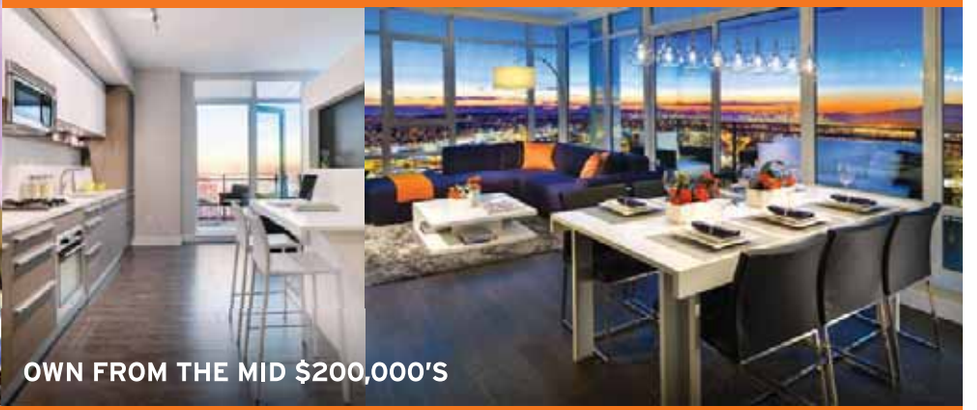

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Yule love these e-readers

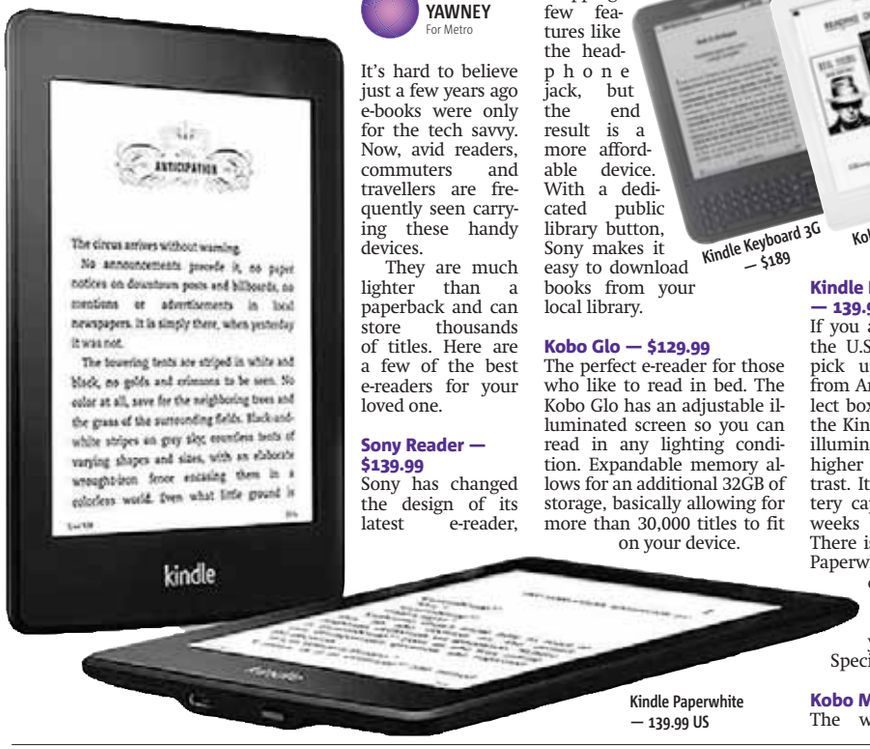
MIKE YAWNEY
For Metro

It's hard to believe just a few years ago e-books were only for the tech savvy. Now, avid readers, commuters and travellers are frequently seen carrying these handy devices.

They are much lighter than a paperback and can store thousands of titles. Here are a few of the best e-readers for your loved one.

Sony Reader — $139.99
Sony has changed the design of its latest e-reader, dropping a few features like the headphone jack, but the end result is a more affordable device. With a dedicated public library button, Sony makes it easy to download books from your local library.

Kobo Glo — $129.99
The perfect e-reader for those who like to read in bed. The Kobo Glo has an adjustable illuminated screen so you can read in any lighting condition. Expandable memory allows for an additional 32GB of storage, basically allowing for more than 30,000 titles to fit on your device.



Kindle Paperwhite — 139.99 US

Kindle Paperwhite — 139.99 US
If you are planning a trip to the U.S. you might want to pick up this new e-reader from Amazon (available in select box stores). Like the Glo, the Kindle Paperwhite has an illuminated screen but with higher resolution and contrast. It's light and has a battery capable of lasting eight weeks on a single charge. There is a cheaper version of Paperwhite with ads (Amazon calls these "special offers"), so if this will annoy you make sure you get the "Without Special Offers" model.

Kobo Mini — $79.99
The world's smallest and lightest e-reader. You can actually fit the Kobo Mini in your pocket. Despite its palm-sized footprint, this device has the regular features of a larger Kobo, complete with anti-glare screen and long battery life. Perfect for those who read on the go.

Kindle Keyboard 3G — $189
This older model of Amazon's popular e-reader is available in select Canadian stores. It may be one of the originals, but it remains a favourite for those who like downloading on the go. The 3G connectivity means you can download new titles anywhere you have cell reception at no additional charge. The built-in keyboard is great for those who hate touchscreen typing.

HOLIDAY 2012 m gift guide

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Best books for the ladies on your list

HEATHER BUCHAN
For Metro

A roundup of the top five books that are sure to engross the women on your Christmas 2012 gift list — and two stocking-stuffer suggestions.

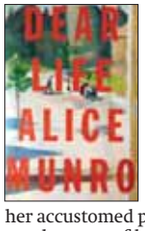
Fifty Shades Trilogy

E. L. James, $47.85, Knopf Doubledy Publishing Group, Paperback Box Set.

The three-volume paperback boxed set of the New York Times #1 bestselling trilogy includes Fifty Shades of Grey, Fifty Shades Darker and Fifty Shades Freed.

Dear Life

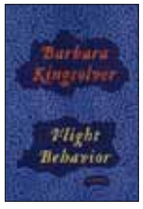
Alice Munro, $32.99, McClelland & Stewart, Hardcover.



The award-winning author illumines the moment a life is shaped — the moment a dream, or sex or a twist of fate turns a person out of her accustomed path and into another way of being — with stories set in the area around Lake Ontario where Munro herself lives.

Flight Behavior

Barbara Kingsolver, $31.99, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., Hardcover.



Set in present-day rural Tennessee, this novel tells to the story of Dellarobia Turnbow, a restless young farmwife who, after years of isolation and boredom, finds her path in life suddenly opening out.

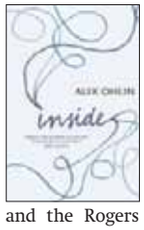
Let's Pretend This Never Happened: (A Mostly True Memoir)

Jenny Lawson, $27.50, Penguin USA, Hardcover.

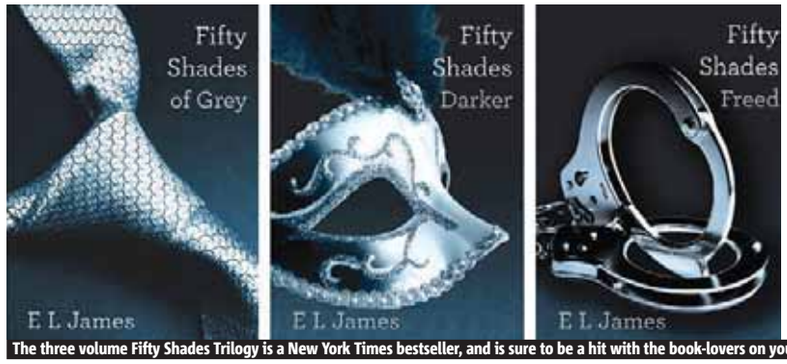
Blogging sensation Jenny Lawson takes readers on a hilarious journey recalling her bizarre upbringing in Texas, her awkward high school years and her relationship with her long-suffering husband. The premise: the most mortifying moments of our lives are the ones that define us.

Inside

Alix Ohlin, $22.95, House of Anansi Press Inc., Paperback.



Shortlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize and the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, the book follows four compelling and complex characters from Montreal, New York, Hollywood and Rwanda, and explores the dangers and imperatives of making ourselves available to, and responsible for, those dearest to us.



The three volume Fifty Shades Trilogy is a New York Times bestseller, and is sure to be a hit with the book-lovers on your list. ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

And check out these paperback stocking stuffers:

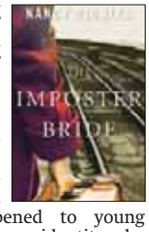
Bossypants

Tina Fey, $17.50, Little, Brown and Company, Paperback.

With frank humour, Fey tells her life story — from her early days as a nerd to landing on Saturday Night Live to becoming a mom. As the book's description says: Tina Fey reveals all, and proves what we've all suspected: you're no one until someone calls you bossy. (Includes Special, Never-Before-Solicited Opinions on Breastfeeding, Princesses, Photoshop, the Electoral Process and Italian Rum Cake!).

The Imposter Bride

Nancy Richler, $17.99, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., Paperback.



The story centres around Lily Azerov, a young woman arriving in postwar Montreal to meet her betrothed, Sol Kramer. But Lily is not who she claims to be. Who is Lily and what happened to young woman whose identity she stole?

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Hot selections for teenaged book-lovers

HEATHER BUCHAN
For Metro

Here, a selection of the best books to leave under the Christmas tree, or in a stocking, for those hard-to-buy-for teens in your life this holiday season.

All of the books are also available as eBooks.

Beautiful Redemption

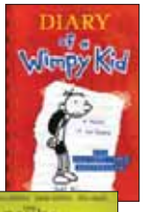
Kami Garcia, $21, Little Brown Books for Young Readers, Hardcover.

The fourth and final book in the Beautiful Creatures series is filled with plot twists that'll keep teen readers turning the pages. The book follows the journey of small-town teen Ethan Wate who falls in love with Lena Duchannes, a girl with supernatural powers that unveil a secretive and cursed side to Ethan's hometown. It's been declared a spellbinding love story.

The Diviners

Libba Bray, $24, Little Brown Books for Young Readers, Hardcover.

This supernatural thriller set in Jazz Age New York centers on Evangeline O'Neill, a 17-year-old from small town Ohio who is sent to live with her uncle in Manhattan. Adventure ensues. This book is the first instalment in a series.



The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Stephen Chbosky, $12, MTV Books, Paperback.

A critically acclaimed coming-of-age novel, narrated by "Charlie" — a shy and introverted teen who writes a series of letters to an anonymous person describing various scenes in his life — explores topics of sexuality, introversion, drugs and the awkwardness of adolescence.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid

Jeff Kinney, $13, Harry N. Abrams, Hardcover.

The first in a series of innovatively illustrated books of the same name, this realistic fiction novel about a boy named Greg Heffley and his struggles in middle school was named a New York Times bestseller when it was released in hardcover in 2007.

Tilt

Ellen Hopkins, $22, Margaret K. McElderry Books, Hardcover.

A riveting novel from New York Times bestselling author, Ellen Hopkins, follows three teens whose stories are interconnected through their parents' family relationships.

And try these stocking stuffers:

There is no Dog

Meg Rosoff, $13, Doubleday Canada, Paperback.

In this darkly funny novel, the protagonist is God, who happens to be a 19-year-old boy living in the present day.

Don't Turn Around

Michelle Gagnon, $20, Harpercollins Publishers, Hardcover.

This is the story of Noa, a 16-year-old who has been a victim of the system since her parents died, who holds the key to a terrible secret and there are those who'd stop at nothing to silence her for good.

Unraveling Isobel

Eileen Cook, $18.99, Simon Pulse, Hardcover.

This darkly comic novel blends paranormal mystery and romance with humour.

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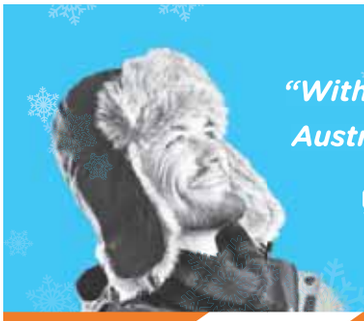

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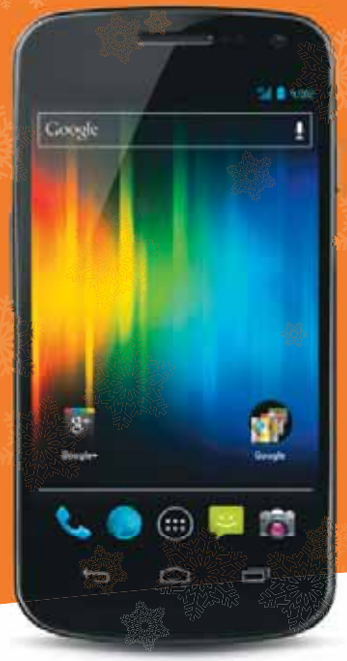

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How to pick the top toys

RENEE LINDO
YummyMummyClub.ca

As parents, we want to make good decisions on how we spend our money and the value we receive in return, especially when it comes to toys.

A new toy can become "old" very quickly as the toy is no longer interesting or the kids have mastered or outgrown it. A trip to the local toy store, especially over the holidays, can be quite overwhelming for parents — there are thousands of toys available.

Here are a few quick tips to keep in mind as you boldly and confidently choose the perfect toys this holiday season.

Determine the toy's age appropriateness

Every age and every stage of development requires different challenges and support. Evaluate the "fit" for your child in terms of age, maturity, developmental level, and where their interests lie.

Evaluate the educational component/value

Look for toys that teach more than one thing and can be used in several different ways. For example, building blocks can teach ABCs, colours and spatial relations, and are also used to build unlimited structures. Similarly, construction sets allow unlimited creations and activities.

Can the toy grow with your child?

You want toys that have utility across several different age ranges. My baby uses blocks because they are colourful and visually exciting and my eight-year-old uses the same blocks to build forts. I think that's good value for money.

Look for problem-solving opportunities

This is why I love puzzles. The best way for children to learn is with puzzles, and they are fun. Puzzles help to develop the all-important logical and abstract "out-of-box" thinking. Puzzles, sorters and stackers are great options.

Encourage imagination

Creative play is another important consideration. By about three years old, storytelling, dress-up and make-believe are a big part of playtime. These activities help formulate their ideas and build literacy skills.

In a nutshell, you want toys that support and augment the learning process with a high fun factor.

YUMMYMUMMYCLUB.CA IS AN ONLINE RESOURCE TO HELP BUSY WOMEN SURVIVE MOTHERHOOD.

Toy selection can be overwhelming, but there are ways to get great value out of the toys you buy for your children. ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

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Hit all the right notes

Ambiance. Music from these MP3 players and accessories can add to holiday atmosphere

MIKE YAWNEY
For Metro

Music can invigorate, relax, and inspire. It's no wonder so many choose to share the gift of music during the holidays. Here are the best MP3 related gifts you can put under the tree.

iPod Touch — $299 and up
All the features of an iPhone without the actual phone. Apple's iPod Touch remains one of the best MP3 players on the market, probably due to the fact you can do so much with it. Play games, download apps, or video chat with loved ones. The new stylish design and retina screen ensure this will be a hit on Christmas morning.

Samsung Galaxy Player 4.2 — $179.99
A device for those who prefer Android over Apple. The Galaxy Player puts everything you like about Android smartphones into a small portable device minus the monthly fees. Music, apps, camera … it's all here, including FM radio!

Belkin Bluetooth Music Receiver — $49.95
Play music from your Bluetooth-enabled devices through your home stereo or standalone speakers — wirelessly. This tiny device will work with any speaker or stereo as long as it has an "aux in" port. Despite its small size, it transmits up to 33 feet away and will remember up to six paired devices.

Monster Inspiration Over-Ear Headphones — $349.99
Premium headphones for the audiophile in your life. These noise-cancelling headphones feature exceptional music production with ultra-comfortable ear cushions for extended wear. Remote and microphone cables come included so you can take calls on your smartphone without missing a beat. You can also swap out the headband for a more personalized look.

Soundfreaq Sound Kick — $99.99
Great sound without breaking the bank. This portable Bluetooth speaker not only gives you seven hours of play on a single charge, it also features a USB port so you can charge your MP3 player or smartphone. Brilliant!

Sony XBA Balanced Armature Sports Earbuds — $99.99
Ideal for those who listen to music while working out. These earbuds are not only sweat-resistant, they are waterproof, meaning you can wash them to ensure they are clean and ready for your next workout. Washing your MP3 player, however, isn't recommended.

Soundfreaq Sound Kick — $99.99

SiriusXM Lynx — $299.99
A satellite radio receiver like no other. Listen to SiriusXM in your vehicle or in your home via Wi-Fi. This small, stylish receiver allows you to pause, rewind and record satellite radio, stream to Bluetooth speakers in your home, or play your own MP3s thanks to a built-in memory card slot. This is also the first satellite radio receiver to feature a high-definition touchscreen.

Clockwise, from top, iPod Touch — $299 and up, SiriusXM Lynx — $299.99, Belkin Bluetooth Music Receiver — $49.95, Sony XBA Balanced Armature Sports Earbuds — $99.99, Samsung Galaxy Player 4.2 — $179.99.

Turning your holiday party into a Hope event

Charity. Hosting a holiday bash? Now you can add a feel-good element to your fun

ASTRID VAN DEN BROEK
For Metro

Looking to do something meaningful this time of year?

While you could collect food for your local food bank or sign up to serve a holiday meal to the homeless, you could also turn your annual holiday open house into a Hosting for Hope event.

Hosting for Hope is a partnership initiative between the Canadian Women's Foundation and HomeSense. CONTRIBUTED

Hosting for Hope, which is a partnership initiative between the Canadian Women's Foundation and HomeSense, is a national event in which your party, brunch, lunch, tea or any other holiday party this season can be turned into a fundraiser for local women's shelters and violence prevention programs.

"We're hoping that Canadians, who will already be throwing parties this season regardless, could register their party at hostingforhope.ca and then ask the guests to make a donation instead of bringing a bottle of wine," says Tamara Robbins Griffith, public relations manager for Toronto-based HomeSense.

Those hosting the parties register with a $50 contribution to the initiative and from there they can send e-vites, messages and post pictures of their event. In turn, HomeSense will send a $25 thank you gift card to the host. The site is also home for a number of party planning tips — such as how to dress up your powder room for the event to ideas for a good party playlist, and on the flipside, also allows you to find a shelter near you where your money would go as well as detailing exactly how your donation will be spent.

This is the first year of the initiative and Robbins Griffith hopes it'll prove successful and turn into an annual event.

"We're trying to make it as easy as possible," adds Robbins Griffith. "This is a way to feel really good about the consumerism of the season. We know you're going to spend money throwing your party but wouldn't you rather have your guests make a donation that goes to local women's shelters and violence prevention programs in your community instead of bringing you potentially a hostess gift that you don't need?"

Tsering and her mother.

SEVA CANADA PHOTO

HELP GIVE OTHERS THE POWER OF SIGHT

In low-income countries, blindness is tied to poverty. Millions could see if only they had access to care. When you give the power of sight, you provide access to education, employment and a better life.

Eighty per cent of all visual impairment is avoidable through prevention, treatment or cure.

Seva Canada, an international development organization, has worked for 30 years to restore sight and prevent blindness in low-income countries by creating local, sustainable programs that achieve long-term change.

This holiday season you can help a blind person see. Someone like Tsering, a blind Tibetan girl. At nine years old, Tsering suffered from devastating, vision loss due to cataracts. As she struggled with her studies, Tsering's classmates tormented and bullied her, giving her the name "trash girl."

Last year, Tsering had successful cataract surgery on one of her eyes at a Seva eye camp. Now 10, Tsering returned to the Seva eye camp, still shy and recovering from the emotional trauma of being bullied.

"I saw things much better and gained some respect from my schoolmates," she whispered, leaning against her mother. "I hope that my other eye can be treated this time and I can be more normal at school."

Two-hundred-and-eighty-five million people worldwide are visually impaired. Of those, 39 million are blind with 90 per cent living in low-income countries struggling for life's most basic needs. Two-thirds are women and girls. It doesn't need to be this way. This is a solvable crisis. We already have the answers. This holiday season, give the power of sight.

– Penny Lyons, executive director, Seva Canada

MANY WAYS TO DONATE TO SALVATION ARMY

If you want to donate to those in need, the Salvation Army wants to hear from you.

You know the Army well. You have seen its familiar red kettles onb street corners, in malls and at transit stops. Those kettles are minded by Salvation Army volunteers, dressed brightly for the season, ringing or jingling their bells. Some volunteers even sing. It's their job to offer you a quick and easy way to donate — and your contribution is always appreciated.

But this is just one of the ways the Salvation Army helps you give. You can donate any amount you want by mailing a cheque or money order, payable to the Army; or you can donate over the phone, using your credit card. You can even donate online.

Clothing and household goods are needed, too. To give, simply fill a bag with new or gently-used items, then drop it off at your nearest Salvation Army Thrift Store.

You can even donate your time. Salvation Army volunteers come from all backgrounds and all ages; and they help out in a myriad of ways. You could even be a bell-ringer, minding a kettle of your own.

However you choose to give, you will be part of the Salvation Army's 130-year tradition of giving — one that will continue for as long as people in your community need help.

To find out more about how you can donate clothing and household items this season, phone 800-757-4483 (PLS-GIVE), or visit thriftstore.ca. And to inquire about corporate donations, contact Colin Mackenzie, product sourcing manager, at 204-953-1514.

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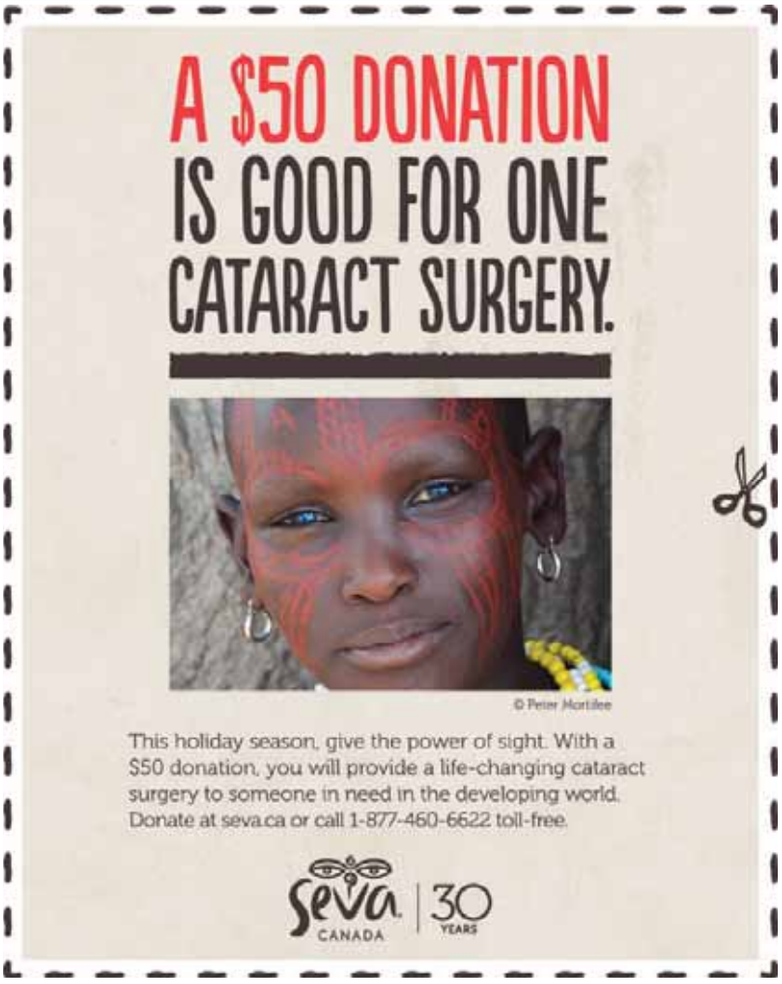

YOU CAN BRING HOPE AND CHANGE

WITH GIFTS OF HOPE FROM PLAN CANADA

Thinking of giving your child's teachers or daycare employees a more meaningful gift this year?

If so, then maybe charitable gift giving is for you. It was for Ruth Pogue and her husband, Greg McLean, who opted to give their children's teachers Gifts of Hope through Plan Canada rather than yet another coffee mug and gift card. Gifts of Hope is Plan Canada's ethical gift giving program focused on bringing change and hope to communities in need.

"I was looking for something different to give," says the Calgary-based Pogue. "And I'd just received a Plan Canada catalogue for Gifts of Hope in the mail. I started thumbing through it and there were some great gifts in there for $25 to $30 so I started giving those at Christmastime to teachers."

For Pogue it was a way to give a gift with more impact — after all, Plan, a non-profit charity, reaches more than 90,000 communities and 174.2 million people around the world. "What I like about Plan is that a lot of their Gifts of Hope are providing solutions to people, be it water or nutrition or maternity clinics," Pogue adds. "So they're enduring gifts or opportunities to help on an ongoing basis."

That's the intention of these gifts, notes Jeff Cornett, Plan Canada's vice-president of donor marketing. "Whether it is clean water for a family, a mango tree for a classroom to teach children gardening skills, or a goat that will provide milk, nourishment, and a source of income for a family, these gifts create a real difference in the lives of children and can help lift entire communities out of poverty."

Ruth Pogue with her husband, Greg McLean.

PLAN CANADA PHOTO

Last year's enduring gift that Pogue selected was the peanut butter project, a gift that, for $35, helps provide a valuable source of protein for growing children, and supports local businesses as well. The gift funded women's peanut butter co-operatives whose work included processing the peanuts, and also provided them with training in business and marketing.

While the catalogue is available online at plangifts.com, you can also order the gifts by phone at 1-800-387-1418 or mail in the catalogue order form. And along with giving the gift, Plan also followed up and sent Pogue and fellow donors updates about how some of the projects were faring.

"With Plan Canada, I feel like there really is a plan," Pogue says.

"It's helping these communities to further themselves. You feel your money is going to something worthy."

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

When donating to charities, many of us pick a donation area that's significant to us. And it's the ability to direct donations that donors like Kathy Crowell enjoy when she purchases a Gift of Hope through the non-profit charity Plan Canada.

Gifts of Hope is Plan Canada's ethical gift giving program focused on bringing change and hope to communities in need.

"I've given my sister Gifts of Hope for the past few years as Christmas gifts," Crowell says.

"I've always given livestock as she is a true animal lover."

Gifts of Hope allow donors to direct funds and engage in Plan's key areas of work such as education, health, clean water, micro-finance and livelihood, and disaster and emergency response.

Many of Plan Canada's gifts also have a donation matching system in which contributions can be matched with a donation from generous funding partners. For example, a $70 donation to provide maternity beds and supplies has a 6-to-1 match ratio, meaning a $70 donation actually ends up having a value of $490.

While a number of Gifts of Hope continue to be popular — such as a mango trees ($15 each, 10 for $120), classroom essentials ($17 for one child, $250 for an entire classroom) to even purchasing a goat ($75 each, $775/herd), which can help provide income and food for families — this year, Plan Canada has also added a number of new gifts. These include: Newborn checkup ($12); maternity beds and supplies ($70); build and stock a school kitchen ($500); and more.

Kathy Crowell in the Virunga mountains with students who are learning a traditional dance.

PLAN CANADA PHOTO

"In addition, this year anyone who purchases a Gift of Hope will be entered to win a trip to Tanzania in 2013 to see Gifts of Hope in action," says Jeff Cornett, Plan Canada's vice-president of donor marketing.

That's what Crowell had a chance to do last year when she travelled to Rwanda through the organization.

"We were able to see the school that was being built, a clinic, a livestock co-op and a micro-financing project," she says.

"Plan Canada is truly making a difference in the world — these Gifts of Hope work. My experience in Rwanda was life-changing."

FIVE GIFTS FOR LESS THAN $50

Here are five gifts less than $50 you can get through Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope program.

NEWBORN CHECKUP ($12): To help support workers who visit moms and their newborns in the first three days of the baby's birth, this kind of checkup can help improve infant mortality rates.

3 BABY CHICKS ($17): Once they start laying eggs, chickens become an instant source of income, often for women. They are also an important teaching tool for young girls to learn livestock management skills.

GIRLS' HYGIENE ESSENTIALS ($25): This gift is essential and can be handed out in critical times such as war/conflict or a natural disaster.

ANTI-MALARIA BED NETS ($30): These nets are locally made and can cover an entire family to help prevent the spread of malaria.

ENDLESS HARVEST ($40): An all-in-one gift that provides gardening essentials such as seeds, tools and training in pest control and farm management.

EMERGENCY ESSENTIALS ($50): For natural disasters or emergencies of any kind, this gift allows Plan to get into a crisis zone fast to help distribute clean water, tarps, high-energy food rations, hygiene supplies and more.

Give a Gift of Hope
Why a goat?
When you give a goat, you provide a family in a developing country with nourishment, the makings of a family business, and a new future. **Gifts of Hope** are real gifts to real projects that change real lives.
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DOGS AROUND THE WORLD NEED YOUR HELP

WITH REALLY WILD GIFTS FROM WSPA

Around the world, people and dogs live together. In some communities, however, that bond is being tested.

Every year, more than 20 million dogs are brutally killed, and fear of rabies is often used as the excuse. That's 38 dogs killed every minute. People think it will stop rabies, but it doesn't.

Through the Collars Not Cruelty campaign, WSPA works with local partners and authorities to stop the killing of dogs and instead sets up vaccination clinics. In turn, the dogs are vaccinated against rabies and given a bright red collar so the community knows these dogs are safe, preventing them from being killed, and protecting everyone from rabies.

Really Wild Gifts are environmentally friendly gifts that help protect animals. This holiday season give a gift and save a dog. By purchasing a Really Wild Gift, you could help buy vaccinations for all the dogs in one small village in Bangladesh or help pay for 15 dogs to be vaccinated and receive a red collar.

When you buy a gift, you also receive: WSPA customizable e-card; WSPA desktop wallpaper; holiday gift tags; and Really Wild DIY Origami.

WSPA Canada is a registered charity, and Really Wild Gifts are eligible for tax receipts. Send tail-wagging gifts at ReallyWildGifts.ca.

Buy a gift. Save a life.

WSPA PHOTO

BRIGHTEN THE HOLIDAY SEASON FOR A CHILD

WITH STARLIGHT CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

For more than 20 years, Starlight Children's Foundation has been transforming the lives of Canadian children with a serious illness or life-altering injury.

What makes Starlight unique is that they are there for the child throughout their journey — from the emergency room to recovery.

While in-hospital, Starlight provides entertainment and distraction from the stress and boredom of hospitalization.

When out-of-hospital, Starlight children and their families benefit from the Escapes and Adventure programs — offering time to have fun together and to leave the sick behind.

"Thank you to Starlight for making my battle against cancer easier by giving me fun events to look forward to," says nine-year-old Trev.

"Those moments when some happiness is brought to your child are huge. It gave us strength to see him smile," says Charlene, Trev's mom.

Featured Starlight gifts include:

Abblicious Bear ($20) — The adorable Abbilicious Bear will put comfort right into the arms of a child.

Baby Bundles Fun Kit ($40) —The kit comes with a book, toy, and blanket to comfort babies in the hospital.

Great Escapes Event ($250) — Provide a Starlight child and their family a chance to spend quality time together, away from medical treatments.

Shop today at bookofsmiles.org.

Baby shrimp and crab meat make a delicious duo in delicate fried cakes

Asian Crab and Shrimp Cakes

This recipe serves six. BRIAN MACDONALD, FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit
rosereisman.com

I love the traditional fried crab cakes served in restaurants, but are they ever high in calories and fat! Here I've used a combination of baby shrimp and crabmeat and sautéed them in a very small amount of oil. The low-fat mayonnaise sauce goes beautifully with these delicate cakes.

They end up at 99 calories and 5.8 grams of fat per serving.

1. To make the cakes, combine the crabmeat, shrimp, mayonnaise, lemon juice, green onion, cilantro, bread crumbs, egg, garlic, ginger and mustard in a food processor. Finely chop until the mixture just comes together. Don't purée. Alternatively, chop by hand.

2. Form into 6 cakes.

3. Spray a non-stick skillet with cooking oil. Add the vegetable oil and place over medium heat. Sauté the cakes for about 5 minutes per side, or just until browned and hot.

4. To make the sauce, combine the mayonnaise, sour cream, sesame oil and soy sauce in a serving bowl. Whisk until smooth.

5. Garnish with the red pepper and serve the sauce alongside. **ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY ROSE REISMAN**

Ingredients

Cakes
- 6 oz chopped crabmeat (or surimi)
- 4 oz baby shrimp (cooked)
- 3 tbsp light mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/4 cup chopped green onion
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 1/2 cup dried unseasoned bread crumbs
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp crushed fresh garlic
- 1/2 tsp crushed fresh ginger
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp vegetable oil

Sauce
- 1 tbsp light mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp low-fat sour cream
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp low-sodium soy sauce

Garnish
- 1/4 cup finely diced red bell pepper

Cookbook of the Week

Seafood made easy

Love seafood but don't have the time to get creative with cooking it? Enter 200 Best Canned Fish & Seafood Recipes by Susan Sampson.

The book is full of traditional and updated recipes, new creations and canned twists on classic fish dishes. The recipes feature canned seafood that can be found in virtually any supermarket across Canada: tuna, crab, salmon, mackerel, cod, sardines, clams, oysters, mussels and more.

Master dishes such as Salad Nicoise, Fish Tacos, Lemon Pepper-Shrimp Pasta, Lobster Mushroom Bisque, Crab Cakes, Tuna and Spinach Risotto and more. **METRO**

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Hay knows pressure of coaching Canada

World juniors. Vancouver Giants head coach Don Hay says tough choices necessary for Canadian world junior squad

CAM TUCKER
cam.tucker@metronews.ca

Head coach Don Hay, centre, of Team Canada watches from the bench during last year's world junior championship in Edmonton. RICHARD WOLOWICZ/GETTY IMAGES FILE

When it comes to coaching Canada's world junior hockey team, Don Hay has been there and done that. Twice.

Hay, the Vancouver Giants bench boss since the 2004-05 season, coached Canada to a gold medal at the 1995 tournament in Red Deer and bronze in Calgary this past January.

With the National Hockey League and its players' association mired in an 89-day-old lockout, the eyes of Canadian hockey fans are fixated on Canada's selection camp in Calgary, and ditto when the 2013 competition begins on Boxing Day in Ufa, Russia.

Selection camp began on Tuesday, with the first wave of cuts coming on Wednesday evening. Five players were released, with more cuts expected on Thursday.

It's a difficult task. Hay is now watching from afar as Canada's current head coach, Steve Spott, shapes his team.

The pressure to win is mounting, especially when the coach must cut promising young players who are typically very accomplished with their junior clubs, and keep others of similar stature.

Open wide the door of speculation and debate.

"When you take the job there's pressure, so you've got to understand that's part of the job," Hay said before the Giants' Wednesday practice at the Ladner Leisure Centre.

"Everybody's watching every decision you make and you're going to get criticized no matter what decisions you make. But it all depends on the final result. If you come home with the gold, all the criticizing stops and everybody's happy."

Breaking the news to a player — a teenager — that they've been cut from the national junior team also falls under the coach's job description.

The desire to play for one's country and the ensuing disappointment of that not coming true for some players is the reality, but one Hay can sympathize with.

"First of all, these kids have all grown up wanting to play for Team Canada at the world juniors," he said.

"They watch it every year at Christmas. It's obviously a big step for them and for their futures and they all want to be part of it. And a lot of them have never been cut from a team. They're all really good players.

"But the coach has to decide which 22 players fill out the best team. And it's not always the 22 best players.

"At that level ... they all bring something to the game and to the team, but maybe they're just not the right fit for the team at that time."

All five of the Lower Mainland players — Laurent Brossoit, Griffin Reinhart, Morgan Rielly, Tyler Wotherspoon and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins — survived the first round of cuts, as did Vancouver Canucks defensive prospect Frank Corrado.

Quoted

"At that level ... they all bring something to the game and to the team, but maybe they're just not the right fit for the team at that time."

Giants head coach Don Hay on the world junior selection process

AHL

Heat home again, but not for long

The Abbotsford Heat are back for a brief home stand this weekend.

The Heat host the Texas Stars for a two-game mini-series on Friday and Saturday at the Abbotsford Entertainment and Sports Centre, before departing for a six-game road trip to close out the 2012 calendar.

Three of those six games will be against the Chicago Wolves, the American Hockey League affiliate of the Vancouver Canucks.

METRO

Football

Abbotsford's Lokombo tops CFL draft rankings

From starring with the W.J. Mouat Hawks in Abbotsford to excelling with the Oregon Ducks, Boseko Lokombo's football career continues to ascend.

On Wednesday, the 22-year-old linebacker was moved to the No. 1 spot in the Canadian Football League Scouting Bureau's December rankings.

Lokombo, who was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, moved up two spots from the September rankings.

Listed as a redshirt freshman in 2009, he has had a productive 2012 junior year as a member of the Ducks defence. He has 34 total tackles, two sacks and two interceptions as an outside linebacker.

The Ducks play the Kansas State Wildcats in the 2013 Fiesta Bowl.

METRO

World juniors. Canada drops exhibition game to University of Alberta

Canada's junior men's hockey team lost 4-1 to the University of Alberta in an exhibition game on Wednesday.

The game was part of the selection camp to choose the squad that will represent Canada at the upcoming world junior championship.

A dozen players among the 36 invited to camp sat out the game, including Edmonton Oilers centre Ryan Nugent-Hopkins.

Torrie Dyck led Alberta with a pair of goals. Kruise Reddick and Johnny Lazo also scored.

Defenceman Frank Corrado scored Canada's lone goal.

Malcolm Subban stopped 15 of 18 shots and Jordan Binnington seven of eight in the Canadian net.

Camp invitees Laurent Brossoit and Jake Paterson tended Alberta's net.

Brossoit made 18 saves on 19 shots before giving way to Paterson, who turned away all 12 shots he faced.

Canada has another exhibition game scheduled for Thursday.

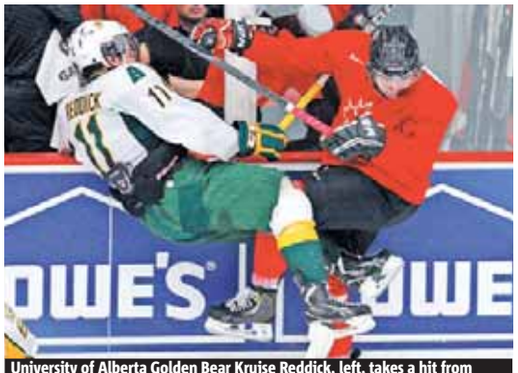
THE CANADIAN PRESS

First round of cuts

The Canadian junior men's hockey team released five players from its selection camp Wednesday.

- Defencemen Adam Pelech and Derrick Pouliot and forwards Francis Beauvillier, Sean Monahan and Tyler Graovac were cut, dropping the number of players competing for 23 spots on the team to 32.
- Four goalies, 10 defencemen and 18 forwards remain. Nine more hopefuls are expected to be released on Thursday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



University of Alberta Golden Bear Kruise Reddick, left, takes a hit from Canada selection camp player J.C. Lipon during an exhibition game in Calgary on Wednesday. JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Commissioner Gary Bettman heads uptown to address the media following the NHL board of governors meeting last week in New York. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

Still walking around in circles

NHL. League and players' union gather in New Jersey, but no progress reported in new collective agreement

The latest round of NHL labour talks ended with the two sides in different rooms from each other.

The players' association and league negotiators met separately Wednesday with U.S. federal mediators in suburban New Jersey, holding discussions that didn't appear to have moved the sides any closer to a deal to save the hockey season.

There was hope going into Wednesday that negotiations could get back on track to the point they were last Thursday before talks fell apart.

The NHL agreed last week to increase its make-whole offer of deferred payments from $211 million US to $300 million. It was part of a proposed package that required the union to agree on three non-negotiable points. Instead, the players' association accepted the raise in funds, but then made counterproposals on the issues the league stated had no wiggle room.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman then said that the offer was being pulled from the table. However, mediators asked the union on Wednesday, if that proposal was back in play, would the players take it or leave it?

"It wasn't much of a decision," said Brendan Morrison, one of 13 players to attend Wednesday's talks.

The offer wasn't formally re-submitted by the NHL. Neither side made any proposals Wednesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"I thought the gap would be closed much quicker, but it hasn't come to fruition yet, so we have to keep working."

Brendan Morrison, one of 13 players to attend the latest talks on Wednesday

UFC

MacDonald will meet Condit at UFC 158

Canadian welterweight Rory MacDonald is getting another shot at Carlos Condit.

UFC president Dana White confirmed by text to The Canadian Press on Wednesday that the rematch is slated for March in Montreal. The Bell Centre card is expected to be UFC 158.

But a main event between welterweight champion Georges St-Pierre and Nick Diaz is "not done yet," White said.

The UFC boss revealed last Thursday in Seattle that the Montreal-based champ has asked to meet Diaz, calling it unfinished business. The two were slated to meet in October 2011 but the UFC pulled Diaz after he failed to attend news conferences in Toronto and Las Vegas. Diaz was replaced by Condit but St-Pierre injured his knee. Condit then beat Diaz in February for the interim title.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kelowna's Rory MacDonald
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Horoscopes

Aries
March 21 - April 20
Focus on what you are good at and forget the rest. If you play to your strengths, you will soon be on the road to fame and fortune. Stop listening to what everyone else is saying and do only what motivates you.

Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Chances are you will have a flash of insight today that reveals how you can earn big money in the not too distant future. Don't forget though that the future depends a lot on what you do right now, so get busy.

Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Today's new moon is sure to bring changes in one or more important relationships. Whether they are the kind of changes you enjoy remains to be seen but they are certainly changes that are needed, so don't fight them.

Cancer
June 22 - July 23
The more you do now, while you are in the mood to work, the less you will have to do later when you are not. Just remember that you don't have to do something simply because everyone else is doing it.

Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
A new moon in the most creative area of your chart gives you the kind of confidence you need to move mountains. Both in your personal life and at work you are capable of great things, so don't sell your talents short.

Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Sometimes it is smart to let your rivals win and this could be one of those occasions. If it gives them the impression that you are losing your grip, it will make it easier for you to win the battles that count!

Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Someone you meet today could become more than just a friend, so get up and get out into the world. If a stranger catches your eye, follow it up with a smile and a chat. One thing leads to another.

Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
You need to come to a decision today about a money matter and the planets will make it easy for you. There is really only one option on the table that is worth pursuing, so commit to it and make it pay.

Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
A new moon in your birth sign means you will find it easy to get your way over the next 24 hours. Does that fill your head with all sorts of outrageous ideas? It should! There are no limits (for you).

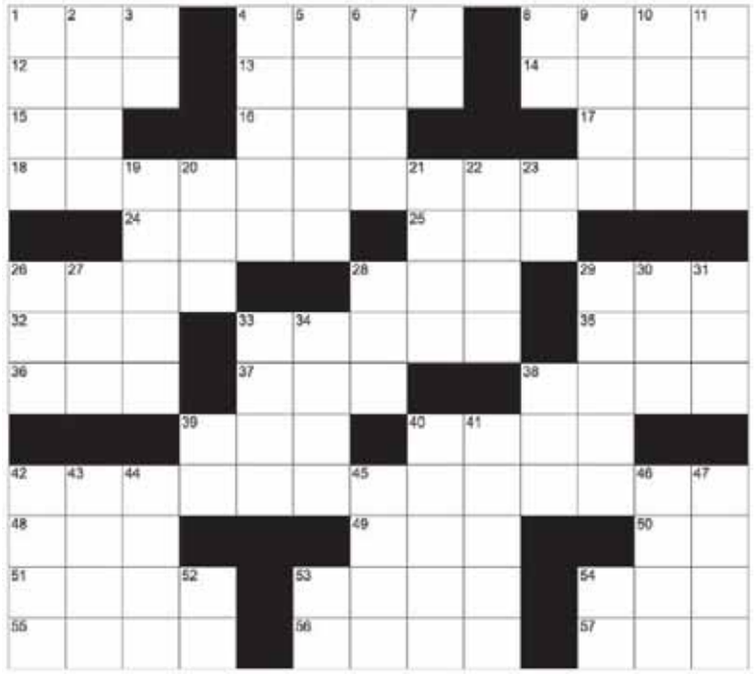
Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
How and why did you allow yourself to get worked up about something so trivial? Whatever the reason, you must now stand back from the situation and see it for what it is: a minor inconvenience, nothing more.

Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You will need to choose between one group of friends and another today. Your time is limited and you can only do justice to one set of commitments, so choose wisely. You can make it up to your other friends later.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Don't get so carried away with your plans and big ideas that you overlook the little things on which they depend. Remember: genius is 10 per cent inspiration and 90 per cent perspiration – yes, even for a Pisces. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword

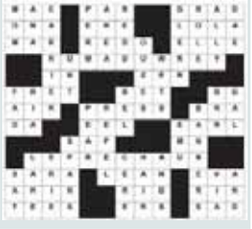
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Nightmare street
4. Ruse
8. Asian nurse
12. Cocoon
13. Comic/actress Tomlin
14. Ward of Once and Again
15. Musical group: — Vogue
16. American Music Awards (abbr.)
17. Refusals
18. 1970's Dick Van Patten series (3 words)
24. Toward sunrise
25. Sanford and —
26. Planet nearest but one to earth
28. — Paulo, Brazil
29. Coffee container
32. Aspire
33. Repeat over
35. Oath affirmation (2 words)
36. Speech hesitation
37. Runner
38. The — Griffith Show
39. Coupe or convertible
40. Send forth
42. Beatles hit song (4 words)
48. Stout
49. Boathouse item
50. Medical drama which starred George Clooney
51. Emily of New —
53. Small branch
54. Form of address
55. Hang
56. Model MacPherson
57. Capone and Capp

Down
1. Fencing sword
2. Burt Reynolds ex.
3. Marcus Welby, —
4. Some shoes
5. Margin
6. Woe is me!
7. — Wife and Kids
8. – The World Turn
9. Restaurant offering
10. Like a bump on – – (2 words)
11. Jumble
19. Bacteria
20. This Hour — 22 Minutes
21. Actor Morales of NYPD Blue
22. Lunch time for many
23. "Strangers – a Train"
26. Screen siren West
27. "— America"
28. Droop
29. Mottled bean
30. The — Couple
31. Christmas trinket
33. Type of horse
34. Wise one
38. Be indisposed
39. Hartford state.
40. High-tech message
41. Unite
42. Sleep under the stars
43. Salve plant
44. Inert gas
45. Wail
46. Bridal accessory
47. Goofs
52. Fargo state
53. — Diem
54. Peru's continent (abbr.)

Yesterday's Crossword



What's online

See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

		8	2		4	6		
	2		7		6		5	
6								8
		5	4	2	1	9		
		3	9	5	8	4		
2								6
	3		5		2		9	
		4	3		7	1		

Yesterday's Sudoku

Today 7°/4° Rain 90% Friday 6°/4° Variable 40%
Know what the weather will be 14 days from now. Check the 14 day trend.
TWN incorporates MSC data

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Color: White

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Color: Stainless Steel

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Color: White or Black

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Models: GTAP2250DWW / GTMX100EDWW
Color: White

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18 Cu. Ft. Frost Free Refrigerator

Model: WRT8G3EW
Dimensions: 29,8" W x 65,5" H x 31.8" D
Color: White

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Color: Stainless Steel

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30" Fan Convection Range

Model: CFEF3019MW
Color: White

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Color: Stainless Steel

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Model: FF2H2012NS
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Color: Stainless Steel

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22 Cu. Ft. French Door Refrigerator

Model: RF220NCTA
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Models: WF210/DV210
Color: White

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SAMSUNG

Model: SMH1816
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Color: Stainless Steel

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